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THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION
V. G. Childe

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The Birth of Civilisation

V. G. Childe

APPROXIMATELY FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO OCCURRED AN EVENT AS unique in the Earth's history as the Alpine folding — the " birth of civilization in the Near East." We could translate the last phrase in Toynbee's metaphor and say " the emergence of a new species of society " or, more precisely but still metaphorically, the creation of a new kind of culture. In any case, it can be called an " event " only in the same sense as the Alpine folding or the establishment of a new species by mutation and selection of mutants ; for it was a long process, though the culmination, the critical point in the transformation of quantity into quality, can be defined rather more precisely : in archæological terms, this was reached during Dynasties 0-1 in Egypt and during the Protoliterate a-b (Uruk) period in lower Mesopotamia. It was unique in that what happened altered the whole human situation ; other civilizations were indeed subsequently " born," but all can be regarded as more or less descended from those of Egypt and Sumer — confidently in the case of India, the Mediterranean and China, plausibly even in the case of Central America and Peru.

No one has stated this uniqueness more eloquently or documented it more cogently than Professor Henri Frankfort in his recent book, " The Birth of Civilization in the Near East." But in the sequel, he goes on to insist on the individuality of each of the resultant civilizations, Egyptian and Sumerian respectively, and to emphasise the contrasts between them till the legitimacy of his — and my — title seems questionable. Can we, in fact, speak of " an event " which happened, albeit simultaneously, in two distinct areas of space, the Nile Valley and the Tigris-Euphrates delta? In what does the " sameness " of two spatially distinct events consist? We can consider only the six most striking innovations common to both areas.

I. We have firstly a transformation in the scale of human co-operation — both an unprecedented absolute increase in the total population and an equally unprecedented growth in the size of the local unit. Total population for areas like Egypt or Mesopotamia can hardly be guessed, the absolute size of cities can be measured and compared with that of the only units of settlement that had existed previously. We actually know the area of some

neolithic villages or the number of graves in the cemeteries belonging to such and can compare these figures with those of the oldest known cities. Thus Jarmo on the edge of the Mesopotamian plain had covered 2½ acres, Merimde on the western margin of the Nile delta about 6 acres; neolithic villages in Palestine and in Europe fall within the same sort of range of size. But after 3000 B.C., Ur of Chaldees covered 111 acres, Khafaje nearly 100. In Egypt no town site of the Old Kingdom has been surveyed and contemporary cemeteries have not been examined so completely as prehistoric ones, but some striking figures are available. A predynastic cemetery, in continuous use for probably 500 years comprises normally some 500 graves, very exceptionally 2,000. The household of a single pharaoh (Zer) of Dynasty I comprised 595 adults who were buried at the time of the royal funeral! In either case the size of the unit would seem to have grown about ten times since the "Birth of Civilization." It is in that sense and in that sense only that I have called this event the Urban Revolution on the analogy of a comparison between rural England before and urbanized England after the Industrial Revolution.

II. The change in scale could equally be illustrated by the measurements of the buildings men co-operated to erect. In Mesopotamia the most substantial buildings were in both phases houses for gods. At Eridu the prehistoric temple had grown by successive reconstructions from an overall area of 3 m. by 3 m. to one of 23.5 m. by 12.5 m. In Protoliterate times it has out-grown the space available for excavation so that the areas could only be guessed, but at Erech the Protoliterate temple measured over all 76 m. by 30 m.; incidentally it was built not wholely of mud brick, but on foundations of limestone blocks, divided into a series of halls and internally and externally presented an ornate façade. On the Nile in early historical as in prehistoric times, tombs were more substantial and durable than dwellings, even those of gods. Early prehistoric tombs were of course not buildings at all, but just holes large enough to contain a corpse, doubled up and accompanied by a stock of jars; even in late predynastic times the shaft measures only 3.0 m. by 2.4 m. By contrast the second pharaoh (or perhaps just his prime minister) reposed in a shaft 20 m. long by 4 m. wide and 2 m. deep roofed with beams of imported timber and surmounted by an imposing superstructure or *mastaba* — a rectangular structure of mud brick, measuring over all 42 m. by 16.5 m. and enclosed by stout mud-brick walls 2 to 5 m. thick and probably 10 m. high. Its exterior presented a "crenellated" façade of alternating stepped buttresses and recesses just like that of the Erech temple mentioned above.

III. But not only did population increase; its composition changed too. Of course before, as well as after, the revolution the vast majority of the inhabitants of Sumer and Egypt, whether

they lived in cities or villages, were peasants, actively engaged in procuring their own food by tillage, herding, fishing or fowling. Both the number and variety of products of specialized craftsmanship increased enormously, but it cannot be assumed that all the experts concerned were full-time specialists (i.e. lived by exchanging their products or their skills for food produced by others). Among the earliest decipherable Sumerian documents (the texts of the Protoliterate period cannot yet be read) are lists specifying the persons receiving wages or rations from the granaries of a temple at Lagash and mentioning copper-smiths, silver-smiths, carpenters, cabinet-makers, sculptors, engravers, tanners, potters, wool-scourers, spinners, merchants, clerks, butchers, bakers, brewers, cooks, barbers, butlers, door-keepers and so on. But most of these including the smith, the merchant and the overseer (*nubanda*) not only received wages in kind, but also held lots in the temple lands. Presumably they worked these themselves. Yet the *nubanda* who held 120 acres, thirteen times the normal lot, must have employed " hired labour " (small-holders more probably than slaves) and so perhaps did smiths and clerks. With a First Dynasty monarch were buried carpenters, sculptors, painters, leather-workers, cooks and clerks. To this list of craftsmen attached to a court or a temple must of course be added in Egypt the royal family (polygamy being admitted), high officers of state and provincial governors ; in Sumer, the higher clergy and later kings and their ministers ; and, in both regions, clerks.

No doubt full-time specialists had existed before the critical point was reached. Still, it should be remembered that among modern barbarians like the Maori of New Zealand or the Kayan of Borneo even chiefs worked on their lands, and crafts were practised by peasants who earned prestige and some material rewards for the exercise of their mysterious skills in their spare time when not engaged in their primary occupation of growing or catching their food. The craftsmen in an early Sumerian temple who received plots of land as well as wages in kind occupy a position between the part-time specialists of barbarism and the full-time specialists of mature urban civilization.

IV. Obviously, this social division of labour was at least a step on the road from what Durkheim calls " mechanical solidarity " in which the group coheres like a pack of wolves because all its members are doing much the same thing and therefore feeling alike, towards his " organic solidarity " in which diverse activities supplement each other to the advantage of all actors. No less obviously this result had been achieved by a division of society into economic classes. The social surplus, the food above domestic requirements, produced by Sumerian peasants was concentrated in the temple granaries and then doled out to support the professionals specified in our lists. No doubt the recipient and disburser was a

god, the symbol of the community itself; in theory both the " rent " of a third or a sixth for the use of plots in the divine estate (*kur* and *uru-lal* lands) and the proceeds of the exploitation of the god's own *ningenna* land by wage-labourers was collected in the storehouses in his temple. In practice the god's self-appointed servants, the clerks in holy orders, who actually collected the " rents " and paid out the " wages," must have possessed economic power over against other tenants and employees. Already in the oldest decipherable texts we find a few of these holding lots twenty times as big as those of ordinary peasants or manual workers. In Egypt the surplus of the fellahin was quite frankly collected in royal granaries and redistributed by the pharaohs through their officials and nobles.

It was not however the concentration, but the quantity concentrated that was decisive. A Polynesian chief is able to concentrate a certain surplus, and it enables him to feast the peasants who assemble to build a canoe or a meeting house; it is not sufficient for the gigantic work of building civilization. In Sumer, where the alluvial land is so fertile that a plot of 7/8 of an acre under irrigation would support a family of five, accumulation presumably began in the remote prehistoric temples, and increased with the expansion of population and the improvement of techniques until the critical point was reached. This should be definable numerically in tons of grain and gallons of milk, though the prospects of such definition seem very remote. In Egypt, on the contrary, the requisite quantity seems to have been reached almost catastrophically by a series of campaigns extending over at most three reigns which made the war-chief of the Falcon clan in Upper Egypt master of the whole Nile valley, entitled to receive all the surplus produce of its peasantry.

V. L. H. Morgan was well advised when he took writing as the criterion of civilization. In fact, the oldest written documents in the world are wooden labels and stone carvings bearing the names of the first pharaoh, Narmer, and his two immediate predecessors and clay tablets of the Late Uruk (Protoliterate b-c) period. The first Egyptian writings are indeed little more than the names of " Ka " and " Narmer " expressed in pictorial signs that are invested with a purely conventional meaning and numerals denoted by symbols that are again pictorial but exhibit a regular periodicity. The tablets found at Erech in a temple that replaced the Limestone one mentioned above are obviously accounts; for they contain signs for units, tens, and sixties or hundreds, but the characters, though some are recognizable pictograms, are all highly conventionalized. Thus both sets of documents present a genuine script and numeral notation — a system of conventional symbols. And writing abolishes the spatial and temporal limitations on communication, while a numeral notation is the necessary precondition of all mathematics and hence of exact sciences.

VI. Both in Egypt and Mesopotamia the Urban Revolution coincided with an artistic revolution. The oldest representations of the human form that we can recognize as intended for portraits of persons are bas-reliefs of Narmer and his immediate predecessor " King Scorpion," and a limestone statuette and a basalt stele from Protoliterate levels at Erech. Palæolithic hunters and some modern savages could indeed depict animals in a manner which we can recognize as true to life and naturalistic. Early peasant societies never depicted even animals in a way that we should regard as realistic; they seem to have aimed at symbolism rather than naturalism, as does peasant art today. On the carvings of proto-pharaonic Egypt and on seals of the Uruk period we know at once what beast the artist means to depict and can admire the verisimilitude of his delineation. But in depicting the human form neither the palæolithic hunter-artist nor his neolithic peasant successor ever achieved what we could regard as a likeness; indeed the rare human figures in palæolithic and neolithic art seem to us grotesque. Even today a human representation among barbarians, a Maori ancestor-figure for example, is meant to be a symbol, not a likeness. King Scorpion, pharaoh Narmer, the Lion-hunters and the " goddess " from Erech are just as obviously portraits, full of life and personality.

It is these six agreements that constitute the sameness of the Urban Revolution in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Admittedly they are very abstract.

I. In Egypt the increase of population took place within a political unit; the critical point coincided with the incorporation of the whole Nile valley below the first cataract in a single State. Sumer, on the contrary, was divided up among a number of city states which by the time of the earliest deciphered writings were often engaged in mutual wars. In Sumer, the city as a physical and political entity is conspicuous both in the archæological record and in written documents. No city in Early Pharaonic or Old Kingdom Egypt has been excavated or even surveyed, and cities are scarcely mentioned in the earlier texts, which speak rather of counties (*nomes*). Professor Frankfort has indeed denied altogether the existence of cities in early Egypt; the peasantry would have continued to live in villages as before the revolution while the specialist craftsmen who are attested would have been attached to the pharaoh's court or the manor houses and mortuary estates of high functionaries and nobles. The court itself would have had no fixed capital but would have moved each reign to the site of the new king's tomb. In fact, however, all kings of Dynasties I and II had tombs at Abydos and probably also at Saqqara, the necropolis of Memphis founded by the first pharaoh. So, on Frankfort's own showing, there would have been one or two capitals occupied by the court for a couple of centuries. The lack of archæological and textual evidence for other cities is explicable by the location of ancient centres of population under

modern ones, by the prejudices of excavators who are mostly out for loot rather than information and find graves more profitable than domestic sites, and by the peculiarities of the early written documents — largely sepulchral inscriptions. Yet it remains true that in historical times the city was not important as a political unit in Egypt, while it always was in Mesopotamia.

II. The most imposing and durable structures in Egypt were the tombs of pharaohs and high officials ; till 2000 B.C. the temples of the gods were relatively insignificant. In Mesopotamia exactly the reverse was the case.

III. Though on the whole the same crafts were practised in both countries, the instruments and products of the craftsmen — axes, adzes, chisels, saws, knives, vases, spears, personal ornaments — were as different as common use allowed them to be. Again in Egypt clerks were normally laymen ; in Sumer generally clerks in holy orders.

IV. In Egypt the social surplus was concentrated by a human monarch who received it as tribute, apparently by right of conquest. No doubt his title was sanctified by his identification with the falcon god, Horus. But Horus, it seems, began life as the totem or patron of a single Upper Egyptian group and became a national deity only by virtue of the military exploits of his votaries. In Sumer, it was rather gods who accumulated the surplus as creators and owners of the city lands ; some of these were cultivated for the god by wage-labourers or serfs so that the whole produce went into the temple stores while the rest was let to citizens in return for a sixth to a third of the yield — and generally labour services too. The god was represented on earth by a corporation of priests. A secular ruler is not recognizable during the Protoliterate period but may be deduced from the royal tombs and palaces of the succeeding Early Dynastic period, and is known in the texts as *lugal*, *sangu* or *ensi*.

V. The numerals and characters of the script are quite distinct. In particular the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphs include pictures of distinctively Nilotic plants, animals and tools while the Sumerian pictograms, though much more conventional, depict some peculiarly Mesopotamian types.

VI. The style and composition of Egyptian art contrast with the Sumerian just as do the favourite media of artistic expression. The Narmer palette is already unmistakably Egyptian, the Uruk seals peculiarly Sumerian.

Recognition of these and other contrasts emphasizes the high abstraction of the " event " from which we started. We are a long way from that individual character of any one civilization that Frankfort thinks the historian must grasp if he is to understand its dynamics — its birth and subsequent development. To discuss the theory of history implicit in this objection would be beyond the scope of a single article. Suffice it here to note that

" any one civilization," say Egyptian civilization or Sumerian civilization, is in its turn an abstraction. When an anthropologist or sociologist says that the Kamilaroi — or the people of Middletown — do this or believe that, he means that from observations of a number of Kamilaroi or Middletowners faced with a specific situation on numerous occasions, he finds that most of them generally do this. He knows there are some deviants, but considers the probability of similar behaviour on a repetition of the situation high enough for practical purposes. The archæologist, unaided by written documents, — and even in the Early Pharaonic and Protoliterate periods such are rare and far from informative, — cannot even recognize deviations at all. The " Uruk style " in Sumerian art, for instance, which Frankfort himself has so ably delineated, is just the style illustrated by numerous seals and other figured documents found in Uruk strata. Any seal, diverging from the canons thus exemplified, is regarded either as an import, i.e., attributed to a foreigner, or as out of place where found, i.e., assigned to an earlier or later period. Our inevitably fragmentary picture of Sumerian civilization at the Uruk period is the whole of such actual uniformities stripped of equally actual, but unrecognizable, deviations.

On the other hand, the contrasts do serve to eliminate in advance one explanation for the agreements with which we started. Civilization was not brought ready made from Sumer and imposed Egypt as de Rougé and Morgan once suggested, nor was it transplanted from the Nile to the Tigris as W. J. Perry thought.

Are the agreements then due merely to parallelism in social evolution in similar environments and is their coincidence in time just a coincidence? It is not difficult to show logical grounds why an accumulation of wealth such as is illustrated in Sumerian temples and the pharaohs' tombs should have evoked systems of bookkeeping — writing and numeral notation. Again irrigation-agriculture in the sub-tropical valleys of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates would easily yield exceptional harvests. Since population tends to keep pace with or even outrun the food supply, the observed densities are what would be expected on general demographic theory. Finally, since the effective exploitation of the riverine environment demands rigorous, co-ordinated and disciplined co-operation, centralized direction was inevitable and concentration of wealth would be expected. In other words, the observed agreements I, II, and III can be expressed as general rules from which other agreements, e.g. V, could be deduced. Of course the formulae for I, II and III are not *a priori* laws, but have themselves been formulated by induction from empirical observation. No one has in fact deduced agreement VI from them and the deduction of V only followed its empirical " verification."

But is this the whole story? In addition to the abstract agreements

between Egypt and Sumer already discussed, Frankfort himself was the first to remark a whole series of concrete and specific agreements between the nascent civilizations of Egypt and Sumer :— (1) crenellation decorating the façades of brick buildings, (2) the use of cylinders instead of stamps for sealing, (3) a distinctive type of boat, (4) several art motives such as the antithetical group (particularly " a hero dompting two lions "), composite animals, and animals with intertwined necks. It is hard to imagine how such peculiar devices should have arisen independently about the same time in Egypt and Sumer, especially as some of them (1, 2 and 4) were given up in Egypt after Dynasty II. I might add that the representation of a Lion Hunt on a monumental Egyptian palette typologically immediately preceding that of pharaoh Narmer and on a Protoliterate stele from Erech look like local versions of a common myth.

Some sort of contact between the two areas would seem the only reasonable deduction from such arbitrary agreements. Indeed one of the earlier Egyptian cylinders resembles so closely a Sumerian group that it is thought to be an actual import from Mesopotamia or at least a local copy of such. Luckily more substantial evidence for contact is available. Lapis lazuli was extensively used both in protopharaonic Egypt and protoliterate Sumer. Now lapis was almost certainly brought from Badakshan in north eastern Afghanistan both to Egypt and Mesopotamia and must have crossed the Tigris and Euphrates to reach the Nile, This archæologically attested transfer of a material substance by human agency — " trade " — marks a channel by which ideas too could be transmitted. Intercourse between the two cradles of civilization about the time of " the birth " is proved as well as archæological methods allow. It will perhaps account for the " Mesopotamian influence in pre- and protodynastic Egypt " detected by Frankfort.

This is no revival of de Rougé's thesis of " l'origine asiatique de la civilisation pharaonique " reducing to one two spatially distinct revolutions. It is not demonstrable that the critical point was passed earlier on the Tigris than on the Nile ; in neither area is chronology precise enough to decide that issue. The specific agreements enumerated must indeed be regarded as derived from Asia. It does not follow that they were derived from Sumer. Some common devices might have reached Egypt and Sumer from some intermediate centre ; that is quite likely in the case of the cylinder seal and certain items of costume figured on the ivory knife-handle from Gebel el-Arak and the Lion Hunt stele from Erech. In any case, the Asiatic devices do not all appear on the Nile at precisely the same point in the archæological record. On the other hand, there is not a scrap of evidence for postulating a third centre from which civilization, fully formed, could have been transplanted both to the Nile valley and lower Mesopotamia.

Moreover, influences were not all one way. The manufacture of fayence, characteristic of both civilizations, was most probably invented in Egypt, where the natural supplies of alkali in the Wadi Natrun offered an unique opportunity for the discovery. Hence the birth of civilization on the Nile and on the Tigris-Euphrates must be regarded as distinct but not independent events. Cross-fertilization between two progressive societies each following their own proper line of development in similar, but not identical, environments was an essential moment in the process, the unique factor that justifies our title. Having to this extent refuted Prof. Frankfort's criticism of my account of the Urban Revolution, it would not be inappropriate to deal with another misapprehension. To say that Sumerian deities or temple administrators, the pharaohs and their officials, were supported by rents or taxes and labour owed by the farmers is not to impeach them as parasites or exploiters. That charge would be as irrelevant as Rostovtsev's that the cities of the Roman Empire were parasites upon the countryside. Every full-time specialist who neither farms nor fishes lives on the grain, milk and fish produced by the peasantry. If the latter are not adequately repaid by the wise government of Hor-aha, the wise books of Prof. Childe and the technical skill of tractor-mechanic Smith, the latter each and all are parasites and exploiters, but only then. To defend the townsmen of Mesopotamia against this charge of parasitism, Frankfort finds it necessary to deny that they were in fact full-time specialists ; every Sumerian citizen, he argues, was a practical farmer, and at seed time and harvest, priests and smiths were busy on the farms. Such a defence is irrelevant, even if the undocumented statement be correct — and there are grounds for doubting this. It is rather the fact and the adequacy of the repayment that should be established.

Without an inconclusive debate on the value of imponderables, such as security against real or imaginary dangers, that issue can be discussed only in the economic sphere. In this domain, the primary producers were undoubtedly repaid ; the " Urban Revolution," which is the economic aspect of the " Birth of Civilization ", did release new productive forces — irrigation works, metal tools and the instruments which such alone could produce, and so on. And for this release, concentration of the social surplus was indispensable. In so far as the pharaohs used the manpower and resources they controlled for digging irrigation canals and thus extending the cultivable area — such use was attributed to the first pharaoh by tradition and is suggested in the case of the yet earlier king Scorpion by the scene carved on his votive mace-head — they were augmenting the productive forces. And so too with the similar employment of " the god's people " in the Sumerian city. The rapid expansion of population and wealth illustrated by Egyptian cemeteries under Dynasty I and by Protoliterate-Early Dynastic I

buildings and graves in Sumer is positive evidence that the mode of production did in fact further the development of productive forces.

But was this repayment " adequate " ? Did the primary producers, the vast majority of the population of Egypt and Mesopotamia, benefit from — i.e. consume — the growing output of the newly liberated forces ? If their consuming power were not adequate, production itself would cease to expand. This is precisely what happened. The collection of the surplus produce from the peasantry was in practice applied so strictly that they could not benefit from the rising standard of living in Egypt. By the time of Dynasty III it became necessary to return some of it to the peasantry through " relief works " — for that is what pyramid-building amounted to in fact, though neither architects nor workers were conscious of it — to keep them going at all ! At Lagash in Sumer, high temple officers managed to secure lots in the temple lands that they could not possibly work themselves and exceeded the average holdings ten or twenty times, till at last the State, personified in the *ensi*, Urukagina, had to intervene to check their exactions and protect the poor and weak. After Dynasty I in Egypt and the Protoliterate period in Mesopotamia, few if any new inventions to increase the productive forces were adopted in either civilization, and this observation shows that the mode of production had become a fetter. It is not the historians' business to try to imagine a mode of production that would have achieved civilization without involving this contradiction. Civilization was in fact born, and the birth justified its midwife.

Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain

E. A. Thompson

MANY THEORIES HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD TO ACCOUNT FOR THE FALL OF the Western Roman Empire, but not all of them have allowed sufficient importance to the prolonged series of revolts which broke out in late Roman times in the countryside of Gaul and Spain, as well as in other regions of the Empire. Our sources seem to suggest that these revolts were due primarily to the agricultural slaves, or at any rate that slaves played a prominent part in them.[1] But the slaves certainly did not fight alone. They won allies from other sections of society including the middle classes — we even hear of a physician joining in their movement — so that if we refer to these risings as 'peasant' revolts we must recognize that we are using the word 'peasant' only for want of a better term.[2] The rebels themselves in Gaul and Spain took on the name of *Bacaudae* — there is little MS. evidence for the form *Bagaudae* — which first makes it appearance in connexion with one of their risings late in the third-century and which soon came to be used by those against whom the peasants revolted.[3]

I am not competent to discuss the precise methods of exploitation or to say exactly what turn of precisely which screw drove the peasant at last to throw down his plough in despair and run to the greenwood. But it may be worth while to collect the evidence relating to (*a*) the extent both in time and in space of the peasant movements of Gaul and Spain, (*b*) the organization and tactics of the Bacaudae, and (*c*) the aims of their movement.

The exploits, to say nothing of the aims and organization, of the Bacaudae are passed over almost in silence by writers of the time when they were active. All our authorities belonged to a greater or lesser extent to the propertied classes of the Empire, and therefore to a greater or lesser degree had reason to dread the Bacaudae. When it is dangerously threatened, a propertied class will often conceal (if it can), and even deny, the very existence of those who seek to overthrow it. That is why a panegyrist of the Emperor Maximian, whose victory over the Bacaudae in 286 he could not omit to mention altogether — for it was the first and in some ways the most striking of that Emperor's victories — contents himself with hinting briefly at the character of the Emperor's foes, and then hastens to add: 'I pass this by hurriedly, for I see that such is your *pietas* you would

prefer that that victory were forgotten rather than glorified.' And a few moments later he does not venture even thus far, but dismisses the whole topic in a brief sentence which is innocent of any explicit mention of the hated Bacaudae : ' I omit your innumerable battles and victories throughout the whole of Gaul ' in which his enemies had been Roman peasants.[4] This practice of suppressing mention of the Bacaudae is repeated by an otherwise scrupulous fourth-century historian who never tires of assuring his readers that to falsify history is no more criminal than to omit mention of important events.[5] As for the rebels' aims it is an exasperating but a far from unexpected fact that in the literature of western Europe in the third-, fourth-, and fifth-centuries only a single sentence, a line of unpoetical poetry, a mere pentameter tells us of these.[6] It seems fair to conclude then that the revolts of the peasantry were considerably more frequent and extensive than our authorities' explicit references to them would suggest. And although the word Bacaudae was not used until late in the third-century the phenomenon which it denoted had forced itself upon the attention of historians a century earlier.

The first great Gallic and Spanish revolt of the type that interests us occurred late in the second-century A.D., when the calamitous wars of Marcus Aurelius and the interminable plague were followed by the civil wars of Septimius Severus and his rivals. It is likely that the great landowners did what they could to pass the colossal burdens created by these disasters on to the shoulders of the poorer classes. And the massive reaction of the oppressed began in the eighties of the second-century. The revolt of Maternus is in its magnitude and doubtless in its purpose, too, without a parallel in the earlier history of the Empire.[7]

Maternus was a soldier with many brave deeds to his name who deserted the army about the year 186 and persuaded some of his fellow-soldiers to do the same. ' In a short time,' writes our sole authority for his career, ' he gathered together a numerous band of rascals, and at first he overran villages and estates, and plundered them ; but when he was master of great wealth he collected a more numerous throng of rascals with promises of large gifts and a share of what was taken, so that they no longer had the status of brigands but of enemies. For they now proceeded to attack the largest cities, and forcing open the prisons they set free those who had been confined in them, no matter what they had been charged with, promised them impunity, and by good treatment won them over to join them. They overran the whole land of the Gauls and the Spaniards attacking the largest cities, burning parts of them and plundering the rest before retiring.'

Maternus had only to raise the standard of revolt to be joined by ' a numerous band of rascals.' There were evidently oppressed and expropriated men willing to resort to violence in many parts of the West — Marcus Aurelius himself had been reduced to enrolling

' the bandits of Dalmatia and Dardania '[8] into his armies in a period of desperate crisis in his struggle with the barbarians — and when Maternus had put his operations under way he could draw upon a vast supply of (as we must suppose) runaway slaves, coloni, ruined farmers, deserters from the army, and so on. Another authority reports that during Maternus' revolt ' innumerable deserters were harassing the Gallic provinces ' ; and he calls Maternus' revolt ' the War of the Deserters,' to herald which ' the heavens burst into flame.'[9]

But the movement was clearly much more than an affair of army deserters, though these no doubt provided the leadership. Quite apart from Herodian's description of those who took part in it, its very scale indicates that it was a dangerous uprising of the submerged classes of Gaul and Spain : it was the overture to the Bacaudae.[10] Such a movement cannot be explained merely by the desire of a group of poor and desolate soldiers to enrich themselves by thieving and highway robbery ; and Herodian does not try to explain it so. This was an organization which operated from Gallia Lugdunensis down to Spain for a number of years ; and, as an eminent Roman jurist points out, ' brigands ' cannot escape destruction for long unless they have support from the population among which they are active.[11] Moreover, they were so powerful that they could attack ' the largest cities ' with success. Even the efficient and ruthless Septimius Severus, who was then Governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, was unable to suppress them. The central government had to be called in, and it found itself obliged to send an army into central and southern Gaul.

The great areas of the provinces which came under the control of Maternus' men can scarcely be regarded simply as areas of mass brigandage. Many estates must have fallen into Maternus' power, and it is difficult to believe that the estate-owners were left in undisturbed possession of their lands and that they continued in tranquillity to exploit the labour of such slaves and other workers as had not already joined Maternus' bands. We have no direct evidence of what happened to the landowners, but it may be that they were expropriated of their land and possibly themselves enslaved : at any rate, that is what seems to have happened to them during the Bacaudic revolts of a later time.

However that may be, when the central government's army was sent to Lugdunensis, Maternus' men, or some of them, retired from the scene of their activities, but only to carry out what was at once their most dramatic enterprise and the immediate cause of their downfall. In small groups they began to infiltrate into Italy and Rome, like Romulus and his shepherds long ago, determined to assassinate the Emperor Commodus as he took part in a festival to the Mother of the Gods and to make Maternus Emperor in his place. The programme itself suggests that Maternus and his followers

were not themselves the representatives or forerunners of any future form of society : their ideas included no new mode of social existence. Their purpose was merely to replace one Emperor by another, albeit one of their own. ' Anarchistic ' methods of personal terrorism together with strong personal ambitions emerged, and, as has happened frequently under similar circumstances, the disintegration of the band was not far away. Maternus' successes and ambitions had caused him to lose touch with the feelings of his followers, and he was betrayed by some of his companions who were content to be led by a brigand but not by a ' master and an Emperor.' Maternus was caught and beheaded ; but the movement which he had led was by no means at an end. Nearly twenty years later a general was obliged to operate in Gaul with detachments of no less than four legions against ' dissidents and rebels,' doubtless much the same types of person as had been active under Maternus himself ; and it is not claimed that the government forces won shattering victories.[12]

For Herodian, Maternus was a mere deserter, though a troublesome one, and his followers a band of thugs and terrorists. In fact, however, they look more like a powerful army, a combination of soldiers, peasants, and others, whose history was the first act in the long tale of the Bacaudae. The character of their movement must be sharply distinguished from the mere routine brigandage which could be found in all corners of the Empire at that time, and the suppression of which was part of the day-to-day duties of the armed forces of the government ;[13] for the ordinary brigands were scarcely concerned to win control of large tracts of the provinces and to expropriate the landowners. It will be convenient for purposes of contrast with Maternus to linger over one of these bands of brigands, the only one of which some detailed information has survived : it caught the attention of an historian because it operated successfully outside the very gates of Rome and in the heart of Italy itself. This is the company of Bulla, *alias* Felix.[14]

Bulla was an Italian who with some 600 companions ' plundered Italy ' for a couple of years at the beginning of the third-century, and nothing that the Emperor and his armies could do would bring him to a halt. He had a magnificent intelligence system centred outside Rome and Brundisium, and he was supported by members of the local population (either because he bribed them astutely, as our authority suggests, or because they sympathized with his practices). In the case of most of his victims he took only a part of their property and then let them go at once. But when he caught artisans or craftsmen he took nothing at all, but made use of their skill for a time and paid them fairly before setting them free. His exploits, as related by a Roman senator, who speaks of him with a tolerance which he would never have shown to the Bacaudae, were nothing if not audacious. Septimius Severus, when he was told of Bulla's *coups*, complained that while his generals could win wars

in Britain he was himself no match for a brigand in Italy — ominous words for the Roman propertied classes if the brigand should rise above mere brigandage. But Bulla's successes are insignificant in comparison with his remark to a centurion whom he captured and later set free, a remark in which he explained the basic cause of brigandage in all times and places: 'Tell your masters that if they would put a stop to brigandage *they must feed their slaves*.'

In the end Bulla was betrayed by his mistress, and after his arrest the City Prefect interviewed him and asked: 'Why did you become a robber?' To which Bulla *alias* Felix replied: 'Why are you Prefect?' He was promptly thrown to the wild animals in the arena, and these satisfactorily completed the task of restoring law and order.

If it is agreed that Maternus had expropriated the great estate-owners — and it would be strange indeed if the estates were left entirely untouched by such men as his — then it would seem to follow that Bulla's movement was different in kind from that of Maternus. It certainly differed in scale, for at one period a centurion with a company of soldiers was considered sufficient to hunt Bulla down, whereas an entire army was concentrated against Maternus. And while Bulla was a mere kindly robber, a homely Robin Hood, Maternus appears so to have caught the spirit of the Gallic and Spanish peasantry that he could attack cities and estates alike. The difference between Bulla and Maternus, it seems, is the difference between robbery and something like revolution.

What is of the greatest importance for us to notice is that in this 'Golden Age,' this 'Indian Summer' of the Empire, when some Romans were escaping from the oppression of Roman life by joining Maternus, others were doing so in another way — by deserting to the barbarians. And again and again in their treaties with the northern barbarians, we find the late second-century Emperors demanding the return of these 'deserters.' This, too, indicates the shape of that which was to come.[15]

To conclude this sketch of the pre-history, as we might call it, of the Bacaudae, it may be pointed out that not all 'brigands' remained poor and honest men throughout their days. It is said of a late third-century usurper that, starting life as a brigand, he was nonetheless a nobleman in his homeland (the Maritime Alps) but sprung from ancestors who had been brigands like himself; and *consequently* he was very rich in cattle, slaves, and whatever else they had carried off. As a result, at the time when he seized the Imperial power, he was able to arm no less than 2,000 slaves of his own to help him in his venture.[16]

It was *circa* 283-4 that the Bacaudae made their first appearance under that name. The calamities of the mid-third-century had fallen most heavily upon the poorest classes; and our authorities hint as briefly and as reluctantly as can be at the ferocity of the

Gallic peasants' reply to their oppressors.[17] The Emperor Carinus, hotly engaged with the barbarians elsewhere, could do nothing against them; and it was not until 286 that the new Emperor Diocletian found himself obliged to appoint Maximian as co-ruler in the West with the specific task of crushing the Bacaudae.[18] In this task Maximian was successful, at any rate for a time, although it seems that he drew upon Eastern troops before he completed his victory; and there is a famous tradition that these troops mutinied sooner than fight the Bacaudae, and had to be slaughtered by Maximian.[19] Indeed, at a later time some persons appear to have had even more ambiguous relations with the 'brigands.' It was not at all uncommon in late Roman times for officers in the Imperial armies to reach a compact with the barbarians beyond the frontier: for example, they would allow plundering parties to enter and leave Roman territory in return for a share in the booty taken from the unfortunate provincials.[20] There was no reason in the world why such men should not work hand in glove with the Bacaudae as eagerly as they did with the barbarians, if it suited their interests to do so; and some lines of the poet Ausonius suggest that they did not let their opportunities slip by unused.[21]

The chief scene of the activities of the Bacaudae in Gaul was the *tractus Armoricanus*,[22] an area which seems to have extended from at least the mouth of the Loire to that of the Seine. It was in this area that the great revolt of 407 broke out — the largest and most successful Bacaudic revolt known to us, for it was not crushed until 417. It was here, too, that Tibatto led the rebellion of 435-7 and again that of 442.[23] But Bacaudae were also active among the Alps early in the fifth-century,[24] and doubtless if our sources were more forthcoming we should find them at least locally throughout much of Gaul.[25] In Spain in the mid-fifth-century Bacaudae were in arms in Tarraconensis, where they were so strong that no less a personage than the Master of Both Services, Flavius Asturius, had to travel to Spain to take the field against them in 441. He slew 'a multitude of the Bacaudae of Tarraconensis,' we are told,[26] but evidently he did not slay enough (from his own point of view), for his successor and son-in-law had to continue the work of 'maintaining order.' This was the poet Merobaudes 'who in the short time of his command broke the insolence of the Bacaudae of Aracelli' in 443.[27] But even then they were as active as ever about half-a-dozen years later, if not before. For in 449 one Basilius collected the Bacaudae of the neighbourhood, entered Turiasso, and killed the bishop Leo in his church;[28] and in 454 the Romans set some Visigoths upon the Bacaudae of Tarraconensis.[29] The two places with which they are specifically associated, Turiasso and Aracelli, lie in the uplands at the head of the Ebro valley; but *circa* 456 they are also found far away in the distant north-west of the peninsula in the neighbourhood of Bracara, where they were sufficiently active to find a mention in

our meagre chronicles.[30] Bearing in mind how scanty are our authorities for fifth-century history and how reluctant they are to record the struggles of the oppressed classes, we need have little doubt that Spain and Gaul swarmed with peasants in open revolt as Western Imperial history drew towards its close.

The great bulk of the Bacaudae being 'yokels,' 'rustics,' 'ignorant farmers,' as our authorities call them,[31] their armies were peasant armies in which ploughmen made up the infantry and shepherds the cavalry.[32] As for their strategy, it closely resembled, if it was not actually modelled upon, the strategy of the barbarian invaders of the Empire:[33] and the Roman army reforms of the later Empire must have been less effective against the rebellious peasants of the provinces than they were against the barbarians — they may may well have been brought into operation in the first place to deal with the former as much as with the latter. At any rate, the character of this strategy which was common to Bacauda and barbarian alike is revealed by the history of many a barbarian raid: the raiders would split up into a number of small bands, which were more easily fed than one large host, and would carry on a war of ambuscades, surprises, feints, diversions, and skirmishes rather than of set battles. Maximian's campaign of 286 was of precisely the same kind: we hear of skirmishes and 'innumerable engagements and victories,' which lead to the destruction of some of the Bacaudae and to the surrender of others.[34] It is no mean tribute to the generalship of Maximian that he was able to 'restore order' in Gaul in the course of a single summer. Perhaps he divided up the area into military sectors, separated the various groups of the Bacaudae from one another, isolated them, and dealt with them one by one;[35] and in comparison with Maximian's experience and skill the 'rustics' are said to have been confused and clumsy.[36] After his victory he was constrained to show a mercifulness which he cannot have greatly relished:[37] for to kill a Bacauda was to deprive an estate-owner of one of his scanty force of labourers. Perhaps the peace which Maximian restored to Gaul in 286 could well be described in the words with which a seventh-century bishop concludes his account of the crushing of a revolt in Egypt by the forces of the Emperor Maurice: 'And great fear prevailed over all the land of Egypt, and its inhabitants dwelt in the enjoyment of tranquillity and peace.'[38]

A similar strategy seems to have been employed against Valentinian I (364-75) in the early years of his reign, when, according to Ammianus, 'many other battles (i.e. other than those fought against the barbarians) less worthy of description were fought throughout various regions of Gaul, which it is superfluous to narrate both because their outcome resulted in nothing worth speaking of (would he have said that if Valentinian had in fact succeeded in crushing the peasants?) and because it is unbecoming to prolong a History with ignoble details.'[39] In addition, the planting of ambushes along the

roads of Spain and Gaul could be highly profitable, and on one occasion a brother-in-law of Valentinian was caught and killed in one of their ambuscades.[40] But this sort of activity could scarcely impair the position of the landowning class as a whole ; and the main activity of the Bacaudae doubtless lay in their attacks on the great estates and even on the cities, though the mere destruction of Gallic cities interested them less than has been supposed.[41] Probably as a rule they tended simply to raid the cities in search of such commodities as they could not produce themselves in the countryside. After such an exploit they would retire to the forests with the booty they had taken,[42] and resume their life there under their ' woodland laws,' to which we shall now turn.

When Maximian arrived in Gaul in 286 he found that the Bacaudae had set up two commanders of their own named Aelianus and Amandus, who may have had successors in the fourth-century.[43] There is no reason for calling these men ' Emperors ' : our authorities simply say that the Bacaudae were ' led ' by them or that it was they who ' stirred up ' the trouble, and they supply no reason for supposing the the organization of the Bacaudae was in this respect a mere replica of the Empire from which they proposed to liberate themselves. In the thirties and forties of the fifth-century, when a certain Tibatto led them, no title is given to him in our scanty sources ; and his subordinate commanders are termed *principes*, a word that tells us little.[44] What is certain is that the Bacaudae intended to detach themselves altogether from the Roman Empire and set up an independent State of their own.[45]

The only extant passage dealing with the peace-time life of the Bacaudae is very difficult to elucidate, for the writer of it assumes that his readers are already familiar with the Bacaudae. It occurs in a comedy called *Querolus*,[46] which has survived, as it seems, from the early fifth-century. Querolus is asking the Lar of his household to give him a place in life which will make him happy, but he cannot decide what that place ought to be. The Lar puts forward various proposals, and one of them, suggested to him by the word *latrocinium*, ' brigandage,' is this :—

LAR : Now I've got it : you as good as have what you are praying for. Go and live beside the Loire.

QUEROLUS : What then ?

LAR : Men live there under the natural law.[47] There's no trickery there. Capital sentences are pronounced there under an oak tree and are recorded on bones.[48] There even rustics perorate, and private individuals pronounce judgement. You can do anything you like there. If you were rich you will be called *patus* — that is how our Greece talks ! O woods, O solitudes, who said that you were free ? There are much more important things that I say nothing about ; but this will be enough to be going on with.

QUEROLUS: I'm not a rich man, and I have no use for an oak. I don't want these woodland laws.

LAR: Well then, look for something milder and more honourable if you can't brawl.

Life along the Loire among the Bacaudae then is sometimes believed to be free in a sense in which Roman life is not free — '*ibi totum licet*' — and Salvian and others repeatedly speak of men escaping to freedom among the Bacaudae or the barbarians,[49] just as they had done in Maternus' day, but this belief the Lar wishes to laugh off as nonsensical: life is regimented on the Loire, too, and there the regimentation is imposed not by responsible judges and policemen but by 'rustics' and 'private persons,' who administer justice under the oak trees. There appears to be little trace of a State apparatus along the banks of the Loire. The word *patus*, at which the Lar sneers, is presumably Celtic;[50] but since its meaning is unknown it is difficult to guess what would have happened to you if you had been rich before coming among the Bacaudae. The point may be that a wealthy landowner, if he fell into the hands of the Bacaudae, would become the slave of his own slaves. For Rutilius Namatianus, to whom the *Querolus* is sometimes believed to be dedicated, says that this was the fate of the territorial magnates of Armorica in 407-17. Exuperantius, he says, was in 417 teaching Armorica to love the recovery of peace — he had crushed the the great rising which had broken out in 417 — and had 'restored the laws and brought back liberty and does not allow the inhabitants to be slaves of their own slaves.'[51]

Those words are practically the sole evidence for the social aims of the Bacaudae, and they appear to mean that the Bacaudae had expropriated the landlords, and had made them toil in the fields which they had once owned. The laws and the liberty which Exuperantius brought back were the laws and liberty of the former landowning class which he restored for the time being to something like its old position. Rutilius' evidence is in some slight measure supported by the words of a somewhat later poet, Merobaudes by name, whom we have already met defeating the Bacaudae of Spain in 443. He says that after the suppression of the Bacaudic leader Tibatto in 437 'laws' were restored in Armorica, and the tillers of the soil no longer hid their criminal plunder in the woods. At any rate, the passage of the *Querolus* looks like a characteristic piece of distortion of a landlord-less society, with only a rudimentary State apparatus, written by a hostile writer. And although the Lar dismisses it as neither mild nor honourable we may suspect that justice was more equitable and mankind more merciful under the oaks of the Loire than in the Governor's dungeon and torture-chamber.

Whatever the frequency of peasant revolts during the third- and

fourth-centuries, they reached such a climax in the first half of the fifth-century as to be almost continuous. It would be strange indeed if this fact were considered to be of slight importance in the study of the fall of the Western Empire : Empires only fall because a sufficient number of people are sufficiently determined to make them fall, whether those people live inside or outside the frontier. But, on the other hand, the various revolts of the Gallic and Spanish peasantry, even when they were successful for years on end, released no new productive forces. If Aelianus and Amandus had been able to win permanent independence for Armorica, they would not have been able to introduce any fundamental change into the class structure of their society. They would merely have started afresh that process which had caused the ownership of vast areas of land to concentrate into a few hands and which had brought about in Roman society the very state of affairs against which they themselves had revolted in the first place. Indeed, even in the middle of the fifth-century, an event is said to have occurred which, if it is a fact, would seem to suggest that a significant change had come over the relationship of the Armoricans with the outside world. In 451, when Aetius, the champion of the great landowners of Gaul, engaged Attila and the Huns in the battle of the Catalaunian Plains, he is said to have been assisted by the Armoricans. That these should have fought for their enemy is so surprising that some historians have been inclined to throw doubt on the authority who records it. But even if the story is false — and this is far indeed from being certain — the very fact that it could circulate at all is revealing.[52]

Aelianus and Amandus, then, if they had been successful, could have changed the personnel of the ruling classes in Armorica, but they could not have changed the nature of those classes themselves. But the significance of the rebellions should not on that account be underestimated. Although at the end of the process the class-structure of Armorican society might well have been the same as it had been at the beginning, the human beings who formed the various classes would have been very different. And that is precisely the result which the barbarian invaders of the West were able to bring about : they changed the personnel of the ruling classes. Now we have seen that so early as the time of Maternus many Romans of the poorer classes identified the rebels and the barbarians to the extent that they believed a freedom to exist among both which could not be found under the rule of the Imperial government. In Salvian's day men were going off indiscriminately to Goths or Bacaudae or ' other ' barbarians : in respect of ' freedom,' at any rate, there was no difference between them.[53] Indeed, it is difficult to resist the impression that the barbarian invasions could scarcely have been carried out so successfully in the fourth- and fifth-centuries had it not been for the help which the Roman peasantry and other oppressed

classes among the Romans were able to give directly or indirectly to the newcomers. The significance of the peasant movements will only become fully apparent when they are studied in conjunction with the barbarian invasions.

NOTES

[1] *Chron. Min.* I, p. 660, ' Gallia ulterior Tibattonem principem rebellionis secuta a Romana societate discessit, a quo tracto initio omnia paene Galliarum servitia in Bacaudam conspiravere,' Rutilius Namatianus, quoted below, n. 51. From the third-century A.D. onwards it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between rural slaves and rural serfs ; both tended to be included in words like ' servus,' ' servitia,' in contrast to ' ingenuus,' free born, while ' rusticus ' and related words included poor ' servi ' and ' ingenui ' in contrast either to well to do ' nobies ' or to town dwellers, or both.

[2] For non-servile support see Salvian, v. 21, *Chron. Min.* I. p. 662 ' Eudoxius, arte medicus, pravi sed exercitati ingenii, in Bacauda id temporis mota delatus ad Chunos confugit.'

[3] Eutropius, ix. 20 ' ita rerum Romanarum potitus [sc. Diocletianus], cum tumultum rusticani in Gallia concitassent et factioni suae Bacaudarum nomen imponerent, duces autem haberent Amandum et Aelianum, ad subigendos eos Maximianum Herculium Caesarem misit, qui levibus proeliis agrestes domuit et pacem Galliae reformavit,' Aurelius Victor, *Caes.* xxxix. 17 ' namque ubi comperit [Diocletianus] Carini discessu Helianum Amandumque per Galliam excita manu agrestium ac latronum, quos Bagaudas incolae vocant, populatis late agris plerasque urbium tentare ' etc., Jerome, *Chron.* a. 2303, Orosius, vii. 25. 2 ' dehinc cum in Gallia Amandus et Aelianus collecta rustic-anorum manu, quos Bacaudas vocabant, perniciosos tumultus excitavissent,' etc. In *Chron. Min.* loc. cit. *Bacauda* means not a peasant who took part in the movement but the movement itself. There is no agreement on the etymology of the word.

[4] *Paneg. Lat.* x (ii). 4. 4 ' quod ego cursim praetereo : video enim te, qua pietate es, oblivionem illius victoriae malle quam gloriam,' 6. 1 ' transeo innumerabiles tuas tota Gallia pugnas atque victorias.'

[5] Amm. Marc. cited p. 12 above. Sidonius does not use the word *Bacauda* at all.

[6] Rutilius cited below n. 51.

[7] On Maternus see Herodian, i. 10. 3, cf. 11.5, SHA. *Pesc. Nig.* iii. 3 f. For the view that Thermae near Yonne may have been destroyed by his men see *Revue des études anciennes*, xli, 1939, p. 1943.

[8] SHA. *Marcus* xxi. 7.

[9] Ibid. *Pesc. Nig.* iii. 4, *Commod.* xvi. 2.

[10] A. D. Dmitrev, ' Dvizhenie Bagaudov,' *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, 1940, iii-iv, pp. 101-14, first showed the significance of Maternus and his followers.

[11] Ulpian, *Digest*, i. 18. 13 *pr.*

[12] Dessau, 1153. Presumably they were reinforced by the remnants of Clodius Albinus' army. For a usurper's army taking to brigandage after his defeat, see Libanius, Or. xviii. 104 (Magnentius).

[13] S. N. Miller, *Cambridge Ancient History*, xii, pp. 21 f., gives some references to brigandage at this date. A noteworthy success of the brigands of the Julian Alps is recorded in Dessau, 2646.

[14] On Bulla see Dio Cassius, lxxvi. 10, cf. Zonaras, xii. 10 (iii, pp. 104 f., Dindorf).

[15] Dio Cassius, lxxi. 11. 2, 4, 20, 1, lxxii. 2. 2, cf. for Trajan's time, Peter the Patrician, frag. 5.

[16] SHA. *Proculus*, xii. 1-2, 5. Sources for peasant movements (as for nearly everything else) in the middle of the third-century are, of course, wanting ; but that such movements in fact existed is proved by the increasingly repressive measures taken by the government : see M. Rostovtzeff, *Social & Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1926), p. 620.

[17] *Paneg. Lat.* vii (vi). 8. 3 ' Gallias priorum temporum iniuriis efferatas,' xi (iii). 5. 3 ' exacerbatas saeculi prioris iniuriis . . . provincias.'

[18] See the passages of Eutropius, Victor, and Orosius partly quoted in n. 3 above.

[19] See a judicious discussion of the story of the Theban legion by C. Jullian, ' Notes Gallo-romaines,' *Revue des études anciennes*, xxii, (1920), pp. 41-7; but his view (p. 45, n. 1) that the troops may have refused to fight ' par amour propre de métier,' because the Bacaudae were considered ' non comme des enemis honorables, mais un ramas de brigands,' is singularly improbable.

[20] *CTh.* vii. 1. 1, cf. Amm. Marc. xxviii. 3. 8, xxx. 5. 3, etc.

[21] Ausonius, *Epist.* xiv. 22-7, speculates on the improbable but not impossible activities of Theon at Médoc: ' An maiora gerens tota regione vagantes Persequeris fures, qui te postrema timentes In partem praedamque vocent? tu mitis et osor Sanguinis humani condonas crimina nummis Erroremque vocas pretiumque inponis abactis Bubus et in partem scelerum de iudice transis? '

[22] Zosimus, vi. 5. 3, Rutilius, i. 213, Sidonius, *carm.* vii. 247, Merobaudes, *Paneg.* ii. 8, John of Antioch, frag. 201. 3.

[23] For that of 407-17 see Zosimus, vi. 5. 3, Rutilius, loc. cit., and for those of Tibatto see *Chron. Min.* p. 660, s. a. 435 (quoted in n. 1 above), and s. a. 437 ' capto Tibattone et ceteris seditionis partim principibus vinctis, partim necatis Bacaudarum commotio conquiescit,' Constantius, *Vita Germani* xxviii, xl, John of Antioch loc. cit.

[24] Zosimus, vi. 2. 5, cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Vit. Martin.* v. 4-6. At Noyon in Germania Superior there was a municipal officer called *praefectus arcendis latrociniis*, *CIL.* xiii. 5010, where another example is cited from Dhaun: cf. the Greek ληστοδιώκτης, ' brigand-chaser.'

[25] Amm. Marc., quoted p. 12 above, Ausonius, loc. cit.

[26] Hydatius, s. a. 441 (*Chron. Min.* ii, p. 24) ' Asturius dux utriusque militiae ad Hispanias missus Tarraconensium caedit multitudinem Bacaudarum.'

[27] Idem, s. a. 443 '. . . brevi tempore potestatis suae Aracellitanorum frangit insolentiam Bacaudarum.'

[28] Idem, s. a. 449 ' Basilius ob testimonium egregii ausus sui congregatis Bacaudis in ecclesia Tyriassone foederatos occidit. ubi et Leo eiusdem ecclesiae episcopus ab isdem, qui cum Basilio aderant, in eo loco obiit vulneratus.'

[29] Idem, s. a. 454 ' per Fredericum Theuderici regis fratrem Bacaudae Tarraconenses caeduntur ex auctoritate Romana.'

[30] Idem, s. a. 456 ? (p. 29) ' in conventus parte Bracarensis latrocinantum de opraedatio perpetratur.' Salvian says (*de Gub. Dei* v. 23): ' hi qui ad barbaros non confugiunt barbari tamen esse coguntur, scilicet ut est pars magna Hispanorum et non minima Gallorum, omnes denique quos per universum Romanum orbem fecit Romana iniquitas iam non esse Romanos.'

[31] Eutropius, ix. 25. 3 *agrestes*, Victor, *Caes.* xxxix. 17 *agrestium ac latronum*, Orosius, vii. 25. 2 *rusticanorum*, *Paneg*, *Lat.* x (ii). 4. 3 *ignari agricolae.*

[32] *Paneg. Lat.* loc. cit. ' cum militaris habitus ignari agricolae appetiverunt, cum arator peditem, cum pastor equitem, cum hostem barbarum suorum cultorum rusticus vastator imitatus est.'

[33] Ibid., C. Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, vii, p. 54.

[34] *Paneg. Lat.* x (ii). 6. 1, cited in n. 4 above, Eutropius, ix. 20. 3, quoted in n. 3 above, cf. Victor, *Caes.* xxxix. 19 ' sed Herculius [i.e. Maximian] in Galliam profectus fusis hostibus aut acceptis quieta omnia brevi patraverat.' But the extensive and mobile character of the operations of the Bacaudae availed them little against the Huns of Litorius in 437, for the Huns were even more mobile than they. In Constantius, *Vita Germani* xxvii, the ' eques ferratus ' of the Alans, another nomadic pastoral people, was about to engage the Bacaudae in 442 when St. Germanus intervened.

[35] So Jullian, loc. cit.

[36] Orosius, vii. 25. 2 ' qui [= Maximian] facile agrestium hominum imperitiam et confusam manum militari virtute conposuit.'

[37] *Paneg. Lat.* x (ii). 4. 3, xi (iii). 5. 3.

[38] John of Nikiu, xcvii. 29 (p. 160, ed. R. H. Charles).

[39] Amm. Marc. xxvii. 2. 11, cf. xxviii. 2. 11 ff., Anon, *de rebus bellicis* ii. 3 ' nam saepe gravissimis damnis affecit [sc. afflicta paupertas] imperia populando agros, quietem latrociniis persequendo, inflammando odia, et per gradus criminum fovit tyrannos quos ad gloriam virtutis tuae [probably Valens or Valentinian] produxit magis quam succendit audacia.'

[40] Amm. Marc. xxviii. 2. 10.

[41] Victor, quoted in n. 3 above. It is significant that for some hundreds of years editors have foisted on to the Bacaudae the senseless destruction of Autun in 269-70, although the MSS. of Eumenius, iv. 1, give *Batavicae* and not *Bagaudicae*, which is a conjecture of Lipsius : see P. le Gentilhomme, ' Le désastre d'Autun en 269 ,' *Revue des études anciennes*, xlv (1943), pp. 233-40.

[42] Merobaudes, *Paneg.* ii. 9 f. ' adsuetaque saevo Crimine quaesitas silvis celare rapinas,' etc.

[43] Eutropius and Victor quoted in n. 3 above, Zonaras, xii. 31, E. A Thompson, *A Roman Reformer and Inventor*, (Oxford, 1952), pp. 33 f., on *de rebus bellicis*, loc. cit.

[44] *Chron. Min.* i, p. 660. quoted in nn. 1 and 23 above, cf. Constantius, *Vita Germani* xl.

[45] *Chron. Min.* i, p. 660, quoted in n. 1 above, John of Antioch, loc. cit.

[46] Pp. 16 f., ed. R. Peiper (Teubner series). That the passage refers to the Bacaudae is the general and in my opinion the correct view : see e.g. L. Havet, editon (Paris, 1880), pp. 2, 4 n. 1, P. Thomas, ' Le *Querolus* et les justices de villages,' *Mélanges Louis Havet* (Paris, 1909), pp. 531-5, Jullian, *Histoire*, viii, p. 176 n. 3, F. Lot, *La Gaule*, (Paris, 1947), pp. 472 f., P.T.O. etc. But F. L. Ganshof, ' Note sur le sens de *Ligeris* au titre xlvii de la loi salique et dans le *Querolus*,' *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait* (Manchester, 1933), pp. 111-20, would make it refer to the Alans settled on the Loire by Aetius, while others make it refer to a Germanic people : but these veiws seem unconvincing and do not explain why the Germans or Alans should be described as *rustici* : see Thomas, art. cit. p. 534, n. 4. In his edition (Paris, 1937), L. Herrmann, p. xix, though seeing in the passage a reference to the Bacaudae, gratuitously assumes that they renounced Roman law only to copy Barbarian law.

[47] *Iure gentium*, so translated by Havet, ed. p. 217, and Herrmann, ed. p. 12 ; *contra*, Ganshof, art. cit. p. 114.

[48] On the interpretation of this passage see P. Thomas, ' Observationes ad scriptores latinos,' *Mnemosyne*, xlix, (1921), pp. 1-75, at p. 65.

[49] Salvian, v. 22, 26, f., Orosius, vii. 41. 7, Zosimus, vi. 5. 3.

[50] If the reference is to the Bacaudae I do not see how this conclusion can well be avoided. For the suggestion that it is Greek (= *pachys*, ' rich ') see Havet, p. 218 n. 1, Herrmann, pp. xxii, 93 n. 42. But who spoke Greek in the Armorican countryside ?

[51] Rutilius, i. 213-6 ' cuius Aremoricas pater Exuperantius oras Nunc postliminium pacis amare docet ; Leges restituit libertatemque reducit Et servos famulis non sinit esse suis.' The landlords also claimed that their society was ' free.'

[52] Jordanes, *Get.* xxxvi. 191. That the Armoricans fought for Aetius in 451 has been doubted e.g. by F. Lot, *Les invasions germaniques* (Paris, 1945), p. 108.

[53] Salvian, v. 22 ' itaque passim vel ad Gothos vel ad Bacaudas vel ad alios ubique dominantes barbaros migrant, et commigrasse non paenitet,' etc.

The Social Revolution in Bohemia and Moravia in the Later Middle Ages

R. R. Betts

TWO BOOKS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN PRAGUE AFFORD THE EARLIEST opportunity to look at the development of Czech economic and social history during the last three or four years. They are the work of one of the new generation of Czech historians, Dr. František Graus. Together with his earlier article on the woollen industry in Bohemia and Moravia in the late middle ages. (" Soukenictví v době předhusitské ", *Sborník pro hospodářské a sociální dějiny, I*), they are exciting and promising first fruits of his labours and of those of the new school of historians in the Charles University of Prague, which, it is to be hoped, is now consolidating itself to fill the great gap made in the History Faculty by the ill fortunes of war and its aftermath.

Dr. Graus approaches the problems of the history of industry, commerce and society in mediæval Bohemia as a professed Marxist; but while he seeks to demonstrate how that history fits into the whole pattern of the historical process as conceived by Marxist historiography, he would be the first to admit that his work is not revolutionary. There was no need for it to be so; indeed it could not be so, for just as the " February Events " of 1948 in Prague were but the consummation of a political and social development which had been in process for a century, so the reformation of the History Faculty and of historical studies in the University of Prague, which accompanied and followed the political events, was no cataclysmic change, but an acceleration and accomplishment of tendencies in Czech historical studies which had been gestating ever since the days of Palacký and Tomek, a hundred years ago.

The Czechoslovak historians have always been socially conscious, for they realised that the " Czech problem " was not merely one of national rights and constitutional liberties, but was also intimately bound up with the rights and liberties of Czechs as a complex of social groups who had for three hundred years been exploited and repressed both by the German Hapsburgs who ruled them and the German speaking inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia who were very often the landlords, the financiers and the factory owners. František Palacký, the father of Czech history, was well aware that the Hussite movement, which he regarded as the glorious culmination of Czech history, was a social as well as a religious and political

phenomenon. In a most interesting recent work, *Dějiny národa českého, I: Starověk,* (History of the Czech Nation, Vol. I: Antiquity), Zdeněk Nejedlý, the present Minister of Education and the Grand Old Man of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, reasserted the primary and meritorious position of Palacký in Czech historiography. Nejedlý writes of Palacký: "It is true that his method is idealistic, as was virtually all the historiography of his day. To him Hussitism was the accession of modern democracy as opposed to the mediaeval universal authority. But it is noteworthy in his case that he explains Hussitism by secular and not religious forces and factors . . . . Even Masaryk, who in general accepted Palacký's formulation, by laying emphasis on religion makes a retrogressive step. But Palacký, despite the idealistic form of his exposition, was able to describe the (Hussite) conflict and the forces and counterforces which controlled it more justly than anyone else has ever done before or since. And so we too, even if we approach the problem differently, materialistically, must, and indeed do, accept his exposition." The pupils and heirs of Palacký in successive generations: Antonín Gindely, Jaroslav Goll, Kamil Krofta down to the modern liberal historians Václav Novotný, F. M. Bartoš, Otakar Odložilík and Josef Šusta have all developed the social implications of Czech history. Of Krofta's *Přehled dějin selského stavu v Čechách a na Moravě* (Survey of the history of the peasant class in Bohemia and Moravia) (Prague 1919) Minister Nejedlý says: "The whole of Krofta's scientific work is penetrated by a popular and progressive spirit, even though it remains within the framework of the bourgeois science of his day. Also Krofta tried, sometimes successfully, to break through the pseudo-idealistic straight-jacket which constricted our historiography, and got down to the economic and social roots of our history. What was remarkable in his case was that when, not always from the purest motives, but because of the great power of the Agrarian Party, a beginning was made of the study of the history of the peasants, he not only welcomed the task, but undertook it himself. Despite his opposition to the great landlords, he began the work and defended it against their demoralising influence, and gave to the study of the peasant class in our country both a scientific and a progressive character . . . . He too was a model of what could be done within the framework of bourgeois history for the benefit of science and of the people." (*Op.cit.* I 101).

Besides the readiness of the Liberal Czech historians to pay proper attention to economic and social developments, the maturity of Czechoslovak economic history was helped by the early and deeply rooted acceptance of Marxist principles by a growing minority of Czech workers and intellectuals. Socialism in Bohemia has always been very closely connected with education, and the restored Charles University was from the first a centre of social as well as national protest. At that hugger-mugger meeting of artisans, journalists and

students in the upstairs room of the " Chestnut Tree Inn " near St. Margarets in the Břevnov suburb of Prague on 7 April 1878 when the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party was founded, it declared in the first article of its programme : " Labour is the source of all wealth and culture . . . therefore the profits of labour belong to society, given the general duty of labour, by equal rights, and to each according to his reasonable needs." To these principles the Czech working class movement has remained faithful, and as Czech society became increasingly and predominantly industrialised during the following seventy years, so did the concepts of the economic interpretation of history and dialectical materialism colour the labours of historians, even of those, like W. W. Tomek, Antonín Rezek, Josef Pekař and Josef Šusta, who today are labelled reactionary. Certainly during the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic, from 1918 to 1938, Czech historiography was as actively engaged in the scientific study of economic and social history as English, French and German historians, and much more so than the Poles or Magyars. Zikmund Winter as early as 1906 had produced his basic work on industry and commerce in Bohemia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and his pioneer work on the economic life of the Bohemian towns in the sixteenth century was of fundamental importance in the use it made of municipal archives, however much Minister Nejedlý deplores Winter's " objectivism."

In the years before Hitler's destruction of the Czechoslovak Republic there appeared in Bohemia an economic historian who gave promise of being pre-eminent, Bedřich Mendl. He grappled with the memoranda books, the account and taxation books, the registers of the municipal courts and the other manifold and intractable archives of Prague, Brno and Breslau with a courage and skill which bore fruit in his many monographs, of which the most important was his *Social crises and struggles in the towns of the fourteenth-century*. But the great promise of Mendl's work was cut short ; Jew as he was, when he heard the expected hammering of the Gestapo on his door, he took his own life, but not before he had established a tradition and founded a school, the most distinguished living representative of which is Dr. Graus, the author of the books which are the occasion of this article.[3] Dr. Graus, though he has faults to find with his master both on points of detailed interpretation and on the broad grounds of ideology, is very generous in his recognition of the debt which contemporary Czech historiography owes to Mendl.

In the first of the two books here under review, that on the *Urban Poor in the pre-Hussite period*, he has followed Mendl profitably into the field of the municipal archives, and has extended his investigations into the accounts of the Chapter of the Cathedral of St. Vitus and the sermon-literature of the more radical religious reformers. It is his purpose to demonstrate that in fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Prague, besides the two groups of wealthy merchants and the crafts-

men gild-masters, there was a large body of " the poor," that is of those who owned nothing except their labour and who were at the mercy of the employer who paid them wages. From the accounts for the building of the Cathedral of the wages paid to bricklayers, stone-masons, carpenters and the labourers who assisted them, carrying the heavy stones and treading the wheel which worked the crane to raise the stones, mortar and timber to build the lofty vaults and pinacles of St. Vitus, and also in the Entry Books, Steward's Books and Council Manuals of Prague, Dr. Graus has been able to find indications of actual wages paid to building workers, smiths, bakers, coopers, spinners, girdlers, shoe-makers, rope-makers, wool-combers, embroiderers, tailors, carters and labourers. The total number of instances he has been able to assemble is not so great as to satisfy the more meticulous statistician, but after careful consideration I believe he has just enough concrete evidence to establish his main thesis that there was in Prague during the reigns of Charles IV and Václav IV (1346 to 1419) a considerable body of persons without other resources than their labour who hired themselves out by the day, week, half-year or year to corporations or individual masters at wages which were barely enough to keep body and soul together. Dr. Graus further maintains that at this time there was a greater supply of such semi-skilled or unskilled labour in Prague than there was a demand for it, and that there is no evidence that the town labourers were able to find permanent or occasional work in the farms and vineyards of the countryside to supplement their earnings ; in fact the movement of the population was the other way, from the villages to the towns, though why it should have been so in view of the unemployment in the towns and the relatively better economic position of the agricultural workers is not clear. Dr. Graus has further examined the rich source of information afforded by the records of the court of the Steward (Rychtář) of the Prague municipality in which are recorded the forfeitures of unredeemed pledges. These Steward's Books are a social document of great interest. They do not record all forfeited pledges, for loans made by Jews and innkeepers did not come under the jurisdiction of the Rychtář's count, nor do the books Dr. Graus has analysed record forfeitures for debts greater than 60 groschen, a sum which then would buy 10 bushels of wheat (1396), 3 pigs (1414) or 1 cow (1410). There are thousands of these forfeitures, and the pledges are such things as clothes, furniture, books, weapons, building material, cloth, leather, shoes, bed-linen, knives, locks, pictures, crucifixes, and even food. It is clear that not only from the professional money-lenders, the Jews and the innkeepers, the thousands of Praguers who lived constantly on the edge of unemployment and starvation were also continually borrowing from their slightly more fortunate friends and fellow workmen and from their employers just the few groschen, or even hellers, that would

keep them and their families from starvation, or enable them to meet the financial demands of the state and municipal tax collectors and of the Church. In the lists of borrowers there most frequently occur smiths, cutlers, rope-makers, cloth-workers, girdlers, purse-makers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, crossbow-makers, bakers, fish-mongers, butchers, cheese-makers, furriers, tailors, shoe-makers, glass-workers, ostlers, decorators and illuminators, scriveners and carters. Though craftsmen of all kinds, even goldsmiths, appear as borrowers, there were some crafts better able to lend than others, such as the locksmiths, oilmen, fullers, tanners, brewers and corn-chandlers; on the whole the great borrowers were the metal workers, building workers and those engaged in the manufacture of clothing, ceramics and books ; the lenders outnumbered the borrowers only amongst the crafts concerned with the production of food and drink.

Dr. Graus also deduces from his material that the penury of the poor (who, he thinks, were proportionately more numerous in Prague than in any town of Central Europe, and who constituted probably more than half the population of the city) was exacerbated by two monetary factors. The first was that prices, despite frequent fluctuations, on the average increased very much during the seventy years with which he is concerned, while wages remained virtually constant. The instances of prices which he has been able to find are not very numerous, but they nevertheless suffice to demonstrate his thesis. A bushel of barley which cost 5 groschen in 1393 cost 7 in 1416 ; the price of oats was two-thirds higher in 1417 than what it had been in 1382/3 ; an ox cost 70 groschen in 1395 and 105 groschen in 1418. There is also evidence that the price of charcoal, boots, salt fish, beer and wine increased ; the figures he quotes give no evidence of permanent increase in the price of wheat, rye, pork, poultry, lime, lead, shoes and cloth. More convincing is his argument that the poor suffered from the general devaluation of the coinage during the reign of Václav IV, a thing which affected all classes of the population except the great merchants and the financiers ; but, as he further shows, the smaller coins were devalued more than the silver groschen, so that the kreuzers and hellers in which the poor dealt had proportionately smaller purchasing power than the groschen which were the currency of the middle and upper classes.

Having thus established the fact of widespread poverty in towns Dr. Graus goes on to examine the historical function of the urban poor at this time. He is careful to avoid calling them an urban proletariat, for they did not constitute a self-conscious class occupying a uniform position in the structure of production. The urban poor were an agglomeration of many socially disparate groups. Their core was probably the unskilled labourers, but all the evidence shows that most of the journeymen must be reckoned in the number of the precariously employed, as well as many master craftsmen

who were driven to mortgage their houses and to sell their skills for wages. A larger section of the poor, too, was constituted by those who lived on the edge of or outside the production system — the large number of prostitutes (the saintly Jan Milíč is said to have maintained more than 200 converted harlots in his 'Jerusalem' institution in the Prague Stews), the street entertainers, rogues, vagabonds and the host of beggars. It is not surprising, then, that apart from one co-ordinated protest by the poor to the Town Council of Brno in 1378, and another by the "poor tradesmen and simple folk" of Znojmo against machinations with the currency, Dr. Graus can adduce no organised demonstrations or disturbances in the Czech lands before 1419. He concludes that the condition of the poor was irremediable except by revolution.

It is the opinion of Dr. Graus and other historians of his way of thinking that the revolution of the oppressed classes in Bohemia came with the outbreak of the Hussite revolution in 1419, with the defenestration of the consuls of the New Town of Prague by the mob, the sacking of the Prague monasteries, the flight or expulsion of the German speaking, catholic-minded patricians, the seizure of their houses, and the successful popular resistence to King Sigismund's effort to take over the inheritance of his dead brother, King Václav. But Dr. Graus does not continue his study beyond the eve of the revolution. He is content to demonstrate that the Czech religious reformers from the time when Konrád Waldhauser began to preach in Prague in 1364 showed a lively concern with the misery of the poor and the tyranny of the rich. It is perfectly true that in the sermons of Waldhauser and of Jan Milíč, in Matěj of Janov's masterpiece of moral criticism, the *Regulae veteris et Novi Testamenti*, in the sermons of Štěpán of Kolín and Jan Hus, and in Hus's *Exposicio decalogi* it is possible to find a score of strong expressions of righteous indignation against the sinfulness of those who rack and ruin God's poor; but always it is such moral turpitude which is attacked; never that poverty itself is a wrong. Dr. Graus makes skilful use of the sermons ascribed to the most radical of the Hussite leaders in Prague in the years 1417 to 1419, the priest Jan of Želiv, and does seem to prove that Želiv had a social conscience and realised the value of the wretched masses as a revolutionary weapon in his war against Sigismund, the Catholics, the nobles and the urban patricians. Dr. Graus leaves on the reader of his book the impression that the revolution of 1419 was primarily and essentially a revolt of the poor against the rich. In view of the initial revolutionary measures taken by the assemblies of the gentry, by Hus's friends and disciples in the University and the Prague pulpits, and, above all, by the gentry and peasants who in their camps at Tábor, Žatec and Hradec Králové provided the armed striking force of the Hussite revolution, I believe it unwise to ascribe a large part to the poor of Prague, merely as poor; in them, as in the whole revolution, motives

were multiple : hatred not only of the rich, but also of the superstition, corruption, selfish and ignorant idleness of the regular clergy and friars, fierce anger at the betrayal and martyrdom of Jan Hus, loathing of the would-be king Sigismund who was himself responsible for the death of Hus and for the insults of the Czech nation heaped upon it by the Council of Constance.

In the course of his study of urban poverty Dr. Graus was compelled to ask himself how far the rise in prices, the devaluation of the currency and the increasing unemployment in the towns was the result of changes in the foreign trade of Bohemia. He set himself to examine that question in respect of one of the most important articles of foreign trade, cloth. The results of that enquiry are embodied in the second and less important book here under review, *The Czech cloth trade in the fourteenth- and early fifteenth-centuries*. Dr. Graus in his earlier article on the cloth industry in Bohemia had already demonstrated that the production of cloth in Bohemia was for local consumption only. Though some ' grey cloth ' of not very high quality was exported from Brno in Moravia to Austria, Prague had no manufactures for export. The Czech cloth trade, therefore, was merely an import and a transit trade. The bulk of that trade was in the more costly textiles produced in Flanders, Hainault and Brabant. This trade was not direct. Belgian merchants did not bring their wares to Bohemia, nor did Czech merchants go to Ypres, Louvain, Bruges, Mechlin, Brussels, Tournai, Ghent and Saint-Trond to fetch it, for the merchants of Cologne and Frankfurt-am-Main had a virtual monopoly of the Czech-Belgian cloth trade, and they usually brought it to Prague to sell ; if a Czech merchant did venture abroad he was stopped at the staple in those towns from buying his wares direct from the producer. What is more, when the incompetent and lazy Václav IV succeeded his father Charles IV in 1378, political disorders in Germany increased the dangers and costs of that trade and diminished its quantity, and when in 1400 the Germans set up Ruprecht of the Palatinate as Holy Roman Emperor in place of Václav, Czech trade even with the nearer centres of Regensburg and Nuremberg almost disappeared.

The Czech cloth trade (except for a little of the cheapest kinds) was ' passive ' and as Dr. Graus points out, the small Czech exports of other commodities, wax, wood, corn and furs were quite inadequate to pay for the fine cloth bought by the burgesses, gentry and nobles of Bohemia. The balance of trade was maintained by the export of silver bullion or coined money. Dr. Graus does indeed recognise that fact, but he is not concerned in these monographs to develop its implications. Anyone who merely reads these two books of Dr. Graus, with their insistence on the ' passivity ' of the cloth trade and the poverty of half the inhabitants of Prague, would find it difficult to explain how it was that Bohemia could afford to pursue a costly policy of territorial expansion in the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries, how it could afford the expenses of the Hussite wars, how it was in short that Bohemia was a wealthy country. Dr. Graus's oft repeated statement that Prague had no export industry is misleading, for there was one vital industry in which Bohemia was for long supreme in Europe, its production of silver. Until the fourteenth-century, indeed much later, silver constituted the vast bulk of the currency of Europe, and Bohemia had more easily accessible and abundant supplies of silver ore than any other European country, ores which had been outside the Greek and Roman Empires, and so were virtually untouched until the development of mediaeval trade instigated their increasing exploitation. The mines of Jihlava had long been worked, but when king Václav II in the last years of the thirteenth-century brought in Italian engineers and entrepreneurs to work the vastly richer mines of Kutná Hora, the Bohemian nation found itself in a position to purchase the products of the whole world. The 'Prague Groschen' from 1300 onwards was, next to the florin, the ducat and the écu, one of the most abundant and finest vehicles for the growing commerce of Europe.

Dr. Graus maintains that there was no true 'capitalism' in mediaeval Bohemia, because the Bohemian merchants did not use their wealth to hire labour for production, but he overlooks both the capital enterprises of the Bohemian landlords in the late middle ages in the commercial production by hired or semi-servile labour of fish, beer, wines and flour, and also, and much more important, of the Italian and German companies which mined, smelted and coined the silver of the mines of Jihlava, Kutná Hora and Jachimov (Joachimsthal, the eponymous source of the almighty 'thaler'). This wealth of Bohemia in silver was its strength and weakness. As in the case of Philip II's Spain, it proved an easy but dangerous substitute for the development of industry. When the centre of gravity of commerce moved in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries from central and Mediterranean Europe to the oceanic periphery, and when the value of silver was drastically reduced by the argosies from the new world, Bohemia lost much of her one source of wealth and power. She could buy less and less as the decades passed, and, when the only weapon she knew turned to dross in her hand, Bohemia had not the means to defend herself from the political and economic tyranny of her own landlords or from the national and imperial ambitions of her Teutonic neighbours.

NOTES

[1] František Graus: "*Chudina městká v době předhusitské*, (The urban poor in the pre-Hussite period) Melantrich, Prague 1949. 237 pp., with two illustrations, index, and summaries in Russian and French.

[2] František Graus: *Český obchod se suknem ve* 14, *a počátkem* 15. *století* (The Czech cloth trade in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries). Melantrich, Prague 1950. 129 pp., with index and summaries in Russian and French.)

[3] Dr. Graus also was a victim of the war, for he spent much of it in a German concentration camp.

Puritans and the Poor

Christopher Hill

" ALAS MAN ! WHAT SHOULD WE DOE ? THE WORLD IS HARD " (Worldling, in *A Fruitfull Dialogue Concerning the end of the world*, William Perkins's first work (1587), in *Works*, III p. 477.

I

William Perkins has only recently come to receive from historians the attention that was given to him by contemporaries.[1] He was the first systematic Calvinist theologian in England who also had a clearly defined attitude towards social problems. I hope that a study of his theology and its outcome in social theory may help to throw some light on the historical significance of Puritanism.

Perkins's life almost exactly covered the reign of Elizabeth. He died in 1602, at the age of 44. It was the life of a don and popular preacher in Cambridge. He was at one stage associated with Cartwright and others in an underground *classis* in Cambridge, but there is no evidence that he took any part in the more directly political activities of the Puritans. From about 1590, when the radicals began to be subjected to severe persecution, Perkins carefully dissociated himself from them.[2] Nevertheless, he or his works were known to most of the great families from whom the leaders of the 17th century opposition were to come. Treatises of his were dedicated, by himself or his editors, to the third Earl of Bedford, to Lord Russell of Thornhaugh, to the Countess of Cumberland (a Russell); to Henry Grey, 6th Earl of Kent; to Robert, Lord Rich, father of the Earl of Warwick; to the family of Montagu of Boughton, many of whom were members of Perkins's College, Christ's; to Sir Edward Coke, Sir Christopher Yelverton, Sir John Savile; to Oliver St. John of Bletsho, and to Valentine Knightley.

Perkins's decisive influence was as a teacher. Ministers came to seek his " advice and directions " from far and near.[3] His copious theological works presented a systematic Calvinism in clear and popular language, with a conscious application of its general principles to the life of the England of his day, and an equally conscious opposition to the first beginnings of Arminianism in England.[4] He

made plain preaching a matter of principle, and was as popular with the townspeople as with the scholars of Cambridge. His is the dominant influence in Puritan thought for the forty years after his death. His books, all written with his left hand since his right was incapacitated, ran through innumerable editions: " it is a miracle almost," wrote Fuller, " to conceive how thick they lie." They were translated into French and Dutch, and even into Italian and Spanish.[5] Calvin, Beza, Perkins, are often cited as the trinity of the orthodox. Lilburne read Perkins in the spare hours of his apprenticeship: Walwyn knew some of his works by heart.[6] Most decisive of all was Perkins's establishment of a school of disciples in Cambridge, among whom we need only mention Preston, Sibbes, Ames, Cotton, Gouge, Thomas Goodwin to show their significance. When the last-named came up to Perkins's old College in 1613 he found that " the whole town was then filled with the discourse of the power of Mr. Perkins's ministry, still fresh in most men's memories."[7] Through judicious use of the patronage of men like Lord Rich, ministers of the Perkins school spread as a refreshing flood over East Anglia and the Midlands, and occupied key lectureships in London.[8]

In Perkins's theology, four points stand out. First, his obsession (shared with so many of his contemporaries) with the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the powerlessness of fallen man to work his own salvation.[9] Secondly, his conviction that there is a predestinate minority of the elect who can be quite sure of their election.[10] Thirdly, his anxiety to reduce to a minimum the conditions on which one can receive this assurance of salvation. It comes in the end down to little more than a serious-minded and conscientious *desire* to be saved. Salvation cannot be worked, but it can very nearly be willed.[11] Fourthly, we must note his horrified realization that " the common sort of ignorant people " have no understanding of and positive dislike for the doctrines which their betters find so comfortable. They think, absurdly, that mere " moral goodness " is more important than the inner consciousness of grace through which alone works acquire merit in God's sight.[12] Perkins did his best for the benighted lower classes, preaching for instance in the open air at Stourbridge Fair. But it is quite clear from the tone, the assumptions, the metaphors in his sermons that his chosen audience was the sober, hard-working, industrious middle class in town and country.

II

Perkins's theology is Calvinist, but it is a modified and adapted Calvinism:[13] Calvin himself might have disclaimed being a Calvinist of Perkins's latter-day type. Both Calvin and Perkins believed that

social problems were ethical problems, for which theologians should provide a solution. But the problems which Perkins faced at the end of Elizabeth's reign were different from those of Geneva in the fifteen-thirties. The century which separates the Reformation from the civil war in England saw a series of vast changes, not only in economic life (depopulating enclosures, the " first industrial revolution ") but also in economic ideas, in ethics. Two sharply contrasted ways of life, two moralities, were in conflict: a traditional mediæval catholic economic morality on the defensive, a Protestant and capitalist ethic on the offensive.

If we take our stand at the end of the 17th century, and contrast the newly-victorious ethic with orthodoxy at the beginning of the 16th century, we see how complete had been the transvaluation of values. Labour, the curse of fallen man, has become a religious duty, a means of glorifying God in our calling. Poverty has ceased to be a holy state and has become presumptive evidence of wickedness. Indiscriminate alms-giving by the rich man in his castle has yielded place to a careful search for the industrious or impotent poor conducted by bourgeois church wardens. Conspicuous waste has ceased to be a social obligation and is regarded as an anti-social vice. The sordid sin of avarice has been transmuted into the religious and patriotic duty of thrift. Whereas in 1500 the business man " had practised extortion and been told that it was wrong; for it was contrary to the law of God," he was now " told that it was right; for it was in accordance with the law of nature."[14]

Calvin came at the beginning of this reversal of values. He abandoned the traditional absolute prohibition of usury (which theologians had whittled away by allowing exceptions) and permitted it in principle (though restricting it very stringently in a great many particular instances). So revolutions in thought are initiated. This slight shift of emphasis, in the busy clothing centre of Geneva, was enough. Calvinism and lenience towards usury were henceforth regarded as synonymous, however much individual ministers insisted on the distinction between legitimate interest and extortionate usury.

For Perkins, as for his respectable audience of Cambridge citizens and undergraduates, the poor presented one of England's major social problems. He inherited, and developed, a tradition of protestant thought on the subject.

III

The fundamental economic causes of the increase of vagabondage in 16th century England are not in dispute. Great feudal households were being cut down. Some tenants were evicted, mainly by enclosure for sheep-farming. Others, driven below the poverty-line

by loss of common lands, racking of rents and the general rise in prices caused by the influx of American silver, had to abandon their holdings. Inflation greatly accelerated the development of capitalist relations. Some capital accumulated in the plunder of peasants, monasteries and the Indies was invested in production for the market by the employment of wage labour.

The ruling class in feudal society did not invest its surplus: it consumed it. The greater the lord, the more ostentatiously lavish his expenditure. His greatness, moreover, was reckoned in terms of his dependants — those who wore his livery and would maintain his cause on the battlefield or in the law court. There were therefore many reasons why he should dispense hospitality and charity to his dependants. Troeltsch speaks of " the pleasure in giving away that which cannot be eaten, which is found in all social systems based upon a natural economy."[15] But long after the rise of a money economy, largesse still remained profitable as well as pleasurable for a feudal landowner. It was good for his prestige; it was a form of social insurance; and, since he had no doubt whatever that his surplus came from the labours of his tenants, it was also sound economic sense to keep them alive in times of distress. In the absence of supplies of free labour, and of a developed national market, there was little incentive for him to invest in agricultural improvements. There is no need to make a virtue of his necessities: he had no inhibitions, when the time came, about evicting whole villages to make room for sheep. But that time came only when the English clothing industry had developed sufficiently to offer a promising market for his wool, that is to say when capitalist production was beginning to transform the English economy; and he himself was in effect switching over to new productive methods (or becoming a rentier leasing his land to capitalist farmers). The outcry from moralists and publicists in the early 16th century shows how completely depopulating enclosure upset traditional standards of value.

The nascent capitalist of the 16th century had a very different outlook from that of the feudal landlord. (I am speaking here not of a merchant prince like Sir Thomas Gresham, but of a numerically far more significant class — the small merchant or craftsman or farmer who was beginning to give employment to a wider circle than his own family and an apprentice or two, and to whom I believe Puritan social thought especially appealed). To his prosperity the accumulation of capital for reinvestment was essential. His surplus was produced by hiring labour and selling the products of its workmanship: the amount of this surplus depended on his ability to keep wage rates down. So he grudged every penny spent over and above the minimum necessary to induce men to work for him. And since they chose " voluntarily " to work for him, he felt no responsibility for them in hard times. If they did not like what he

offered, they might go elsewhere: there was no shortage of labour in Tudor England. So his attitude towards charity was very different from that of the feudal lord. He stood to gain nothing from it, in this world, to which he attached any value. He saw simply a problem of poor *relief*, and it was not a problem for which he felt any personal responsibility. The real solution was to do nothing which would impede the accumulation of capital, the expansion of production, the extension of employment. If from the short-term point of view the switch-over to new methods seemed to create unemployment (by depopulation), in the long-run not only unemployment but also the perpetual poverty of the mediæval village could be cured by allowing the unfettered development of the productive forces of the country. It could be argued, I think, that protestants occupied themselves with the problem of setting the poor on work not so much because that problem took a specially acute form in protestant and industrially advanced countries, as because in those countries some men were beginning to have a dim vision of the possibility of getting rid of poverty altogether. Others saw that the expansion of industrial production would enrich employers. To both groups the immediate need seemed to be hard work and discipline.

In the meantime the poor must be prevented by coercive measures from revolting, and, by relief, from reaching a stage of destitution that would make them socially menacing. But the main problem was to transform the mental outlook of the lower orders so that they no longer waited at the rich man's gate for charity, but went out to offer their services on the labour market. Hence the sharp distinction drawn by the poor laws between the impotent but deserving poor and sturdy rogues. The pre-condition for the development of capitalist industry on a large scale was the existence of a pool of " free " labour. The problem set by vagabondage and vagrancy was to force men who had been deprived of their independent means of livelihood to enter into " free " contracts to work for a capitalist employer, and to accustom them to the habit of steady work throughout the year. A new pattern of social discipline had to be imposed.

Here indiscriminate charity, from the point of view of the capitalist employer, was a social menace. It prevented the poor from realizing their responsibilities and seriously looking for employment; it encouraged vagrancy, wandering bands of idle and potentially desperate men and women; it was bad for the poor themselves as well as for the rich. A letter to Burghley in 1596 describes the unwillingness and physical incapacity of rogues and vagabonds to work (" by reason their sinews are so benumbed and stiff through idleness, as their limbs being put to any hard labour, will grieve them above measure "). Employers were as unwilling to give them work as they were to accept it. The writer goes on to note the danger of revolt by men who " stick not to say boldly, ' they must not starve, they

will not starve,' " who complain " that the rich men have gotten all into their hands, and will starve the poor."[16]

Not only was private charity incapable of coping with the problem, but it was undesirable that it should. Poor relief must be associated with, and subordinate to, the imposition of the new discipline: houses of correction, family means tests, the apprenticing of pauper children to a trade, whether they or their parents wished it or not. This necessitated a *national* programme, backed up by the power of the state, and administered by the employing class. From the labour legislation of 1349-51 onwards, the centralized power of the state had been advancing hand in hand with the power of the J.P.s as its local administrative agents: national regulation and control of labour came to be one of the more important of the new functions of government. Slowly, as a national market began to develop, the centre of gravity in the coercion of labour shifted from the manor court (the village community as the productive unit) to the monarchy (and subsequently the sovereign parliament) working through the local employer class.

This account foreshortens and schematizes the development of centuries. In the 16th century capitalist production was struggling forward in a society whose institutions and ideas were still largely feudal. The domestic system in industry, with the labourer not yet entirely divorced from the soil, is a characteristic phenomenon of this transitional stage before the industrial revolution. Men's ideas too were blurred in the 16th century, traditional attitudes outliving the social environment which had given them birth. We must beware of ante-dating the fully developed capitalist attitude. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries the situation is still confused and complex; but I believe that is is helpful to think of the new economic system, with its appropriate ideas about the position and duties of labour, striving to establish itself in a society whose own organization and ideas for the subordination of labour had broken down.[17] Since both feudal and capitalist production presuppose the subordination of the labouring mass of society, the conflict between the two sets of ideas was not absolute. Most feudal lords, their real income diminished by the price revolution, had to cut their expenditure anyway, so that the new attitude towards charity was not unacceptable to them. In so far as the poor law was concerned with preventing riots and revolts there could be complete solidarity between landowners and industrialists. There is no English parallel to the Sorbonne's condemnation of Vives's *De Subventione Pauperum* because of its discouragement of indiscriminate alms-giving. But it was, I believe, to the small employer that Puritanism especially appealed. The great feudal household, with its under-employed menials and hangers-on, had no labour problem; but the small craftsman or farmer offered less excitement and harder work to his prospective employees. He needed a body of ideas which

would emphasize the dignity of labour for its own sake; which would be critical at once of the careless and extravagant rich and of the idle and irresponsible poor. He found both in Puritanism.

In attempting, so far, to look at the problem of poor relief in purely economic terms it will have been noted that we have failed to isolate economics from ideas. " Alms," " industry," " discipline," are ideological as well as economic concepts. Men's ideas about the way they and others should behave are shaped by their economic environment and way of life; but economic and moral theories also help to change that way of life and that economic environment. The reformers, from Luther onwards, attacked monks and beggars in the same breath. Bishop Jewell disapproved of monks because, " for all they do nothing," they nevertheless " riot lavishly of other folks' labours."[18] They were parasitic rentiers. We shall later find Perkins making the same point.

But the economic complexity and confusion caused by the existence side by side of the two systems of production was for long reflected in ideas. The second Earl of Bedford, who is usually described as a " Puritan," was accused by Elizabeth of making all the beggars in England by his charity.[19] Clarity, coherence and a new rigour were attained by Puritan social thought only in the last two decades of Elizabeth's reign, years of industrial depression. Such is the opinion of the historian of Tudor Puritanism. " The chief formulator of the new teaching," he believes, was William Perkins.[20]

IV

Marx speaks of the poor laws as the means by which " the agricultural people, first forcibly expropriated, [were] driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system."[21] The Rev. William Perkins, on the other hand, said of one of these laws, the statute of 1597, that it was " an excellent Statute, and beeing in substance the very law of God, is never to be repealed."[22] This view was accepted by the succeeding generation. Even the gentle and Anglican Fuller thought that " King Edward VI was as truly charitable in granting Bridewell for the punishment of sturdy Rogues, as in giving St. Thomas Hospitall for the relief of the Poore."[23] The Long Parliament, almost echoing Perkins's words, declared that the statute of 1601 (which supplemented and extended that of 1597) was to be maintained in perpetuity.

Perkins, therefore, was not expressing an individual view whose harshness should surprise and shock us. He was giving his approval to legislation which was the culmination of over 60 years of experiment, and to an attitude of mind which was to survive for over three centuries.[24] But his prestige in Puritan circles gave to his

approbation, on strictly theological grounds, of the poor law a crucial significance in that revolution of thought about the poor which took place in England between the reformation and the restoration. The fundamental reasons for this revolution, I have suggested, were economic. But it is very much nicer for a business man, finding himself under strong economic pressure to indulge in actions traditionally held to be sinful, to be told that those actions are in fact in accordance with the will of God. It is also extremely convenient to have these views expressed not only to the victims of your actions but also to third parties who might well sympathize with the victims, and to have them expressed from the pulpit with all the authority of a theologian like Perkins, obviously completely disinterested. So ideas lubricate economic processes.

Perkins's thought about society is not an excrescence on or an *ad hoc* addition to his theology, but an organic part of it. His ideas would indeed have been far less influential had this not been the case. Our view of the historical significance of Calvinism must also be based on an assessment of the theology as a whole, not merely of its social application. So if we can see Perkins's attitude towards the poor flowing from a total world view, this may throw some light on the exact nature of the relationship between Calvinism and the needs of the 16th and 17th century bourgeoisie.

Perkins's remarks about the statute of 1597 were made in *A Treatise of the Vocations, or Callings of men*, written between 1597 and 1601. In this he lays down a number of rules, the first of which is " Every person of every degree, state, sexe, or condition without exception, must have some personall and particular calling to walke in." Four types of person break this rule: (1) rogues, beggars and vagabonds; (2) monks and friars; (3) gentlemen " enriched with great livings and revenewes " who " spend their daies in eating and drinking " and do not serve the church or commonwealth; (4) serving men, who should have some other particular calling, " unlesse they tend on men of great place and state: for onely to waite, and give attendance, is not a sufficient calling." They eat, drink, sleep and game, producing nothing of profit to the commonwealth; and when their masters die and they are turned adrift they are useless.[25] Elsewhere Perkins adds a fifth type, more inclusive than the monks and friars of (2): Papists in general, who have added 52 saints' days to the 52 sabbaths appointed by God, " and so spend more then a quarter of a yeare in rest and idlenes."[26]

In contrast to these various types of idle person, Perkins's ideal is the diligent small craftsmen, who " rise early to their businesse, lest night overtake them."[27] Even they, however, must see to it that their labour is profitable to society: those who manufacture or distribute useless commodities sin no less than unproductive parasites like astrologers and alchemists.[28] Work in industry, Perkins adds in a significant passage, " is as good as land, because land may be

lost; but skill and labour in a good occupation is profitable to the end, because it will helpe at neede, when land and all things faile."[29] The vagabond class was drawn largely from evicted peasants: they were helpless in the new world of capitalist insecurity unless they had skilled labour power to sell.

" Art thou a poore man, and wouldest have sufficient foode and raiment for thy temporall life?" Perkins asked. And he replied, in words that have become more familiar since: " Then first, set thy heart to seeke Gods kingdome, follow the word, and labour therein for regeneration, and new obedience; and doubt not, but if thou be upright and diligent in thy lawfull calling, thou shalt finde sufficient for this life."[30] Perkins, however, was far too much of a realist to leave it at that. He knew about vagabondage, he knew that grinding poverty led many protestants to consult soothsayers and witches,[31] drove others to theft and the gallows.[32] So he put into the mouth of an imaginary interlocutor the reasonable question, " if this bee the way to get sufficient, how comes it that we have so many beggars? . . . " His reply is like a flash of lightning in a dark sky " They are (for the most part) a cursed generation . . . They joyne not themselves to any setled congregation for the obtaining of Gods kingdome, and so this promise belongs not to them."[33]

This considered answer to a real and difficult social problem was no chance phrase. Perkins repeated it in other words on several occasions. " Rogues, beggars, vagabonds . . . commonly are of no civill societie or corporation, nor of any particular Church: and are as rotten legges, and armes, that droppe from the body . . . To wander up and downe from yeare to yeare to this ende, to seeke and procure bodily maintenance, is no calling, but the life of a beast."[34] " If every man must be subject to the power of the Magistrate for conscience sake, then all wandring beggars and roagues, that passe from place to place, beeing under no certaine Magistracie or Ministerie, nor joyning themselves to any set societie in Church, or Common-wealth, are plagues and banes of both, and are to bee taken as maine enemies of this ordinance of God [" These dreamers also defile the flesh, and despise governement, and speake evill of them that are in authoritie " — *Jude* 8] ; and seeing a most excellent lawe is provided to restraine them, it is the part of every good subject or Christian to set themselves for the executing, strengthening and upholding of the same."[35]

I have quoted at length because this seems to me a crucial point. The argument is in part traditional. Pilgrims, wandering scholars, and other vagrants had their place in feudal society. But their numbers were small in relation to the stable nuclei of that society, village communities and gilds. In the 16th century, however, vagabondage was on a new scale: and there were no monasteries to feed the wanderers. Large numbers of such men, women and

children were members of no settled community, and consequently had no access to the means of grace, sacraments and sermons.

But the real breach with mediæval Catholicism comes in Perkins's attitude to the church, which is Calvin's.[36] In one sense the church is the whole of society: " church and state " for a Puritan means something more like our antithesis of society and state, or people and government. But for a Calvinist there is also a special sense in which only the elect are the true church. " No man," wrote Perkins, " can believe himselfe to be a member of the Church, unlesse withall hee beleeve that he is predestinate to life everlasting."[37] Now there was general agreement among Calvinist theologians that the elect were a minority. Hence Perkins's traditional objection to " the opinion of *Universall saving grace*; appertaining to all and every man . . . For it puls downe the pale of the Church, and laies it waste as every common field. . . . If men should be tolde that whether they live in the market towne or no, there shall be sufficient provision brought them, if they will but receive it and accept of it, who would then come to the market?"[38]

This dual conception of the church, as in a general sense the whole population, but in a particular sense the elect only, is an essential feature of Calvinist thought.[39] It explains the dominant rôle of the godly minority in running the church, and the supreme importance of discipline. Everywhere in Calvinist churches the ruling groups, the elders, were overwhelmingly drawn from the propertied minority:[40] and the discipline turns out to be, among other things, the imposition and maintenance of standards of social behaviour agreeable to the employing class.

Now withdrawal from this church, Perkins tells us, even the involuntary withdrawal of an evicted peasant, is evidence of divine disapproval. Beggars are " (for the most part) a cursed generation." Some amount of property and worldly security appears to be a minimum condition without which salvation is impossible. Again this conception of justification by success was to become a commonplace of Puritan thought; but Perkins was one of its earliest English exponents. Riches are good in themselves.[41] " Men are to bee honoured for their riches."[42] When Jesus told us not to lay up treasures upon earth he did not intend altogether to forbid the fruition and possession of goods and riches; but only covetousness and excess.[43] The words " Take no thought for the morrow " do not mean that " moderate care " is unlawful.[44] It is indeed a duty to save for one's children.[45] Usury is " a sinne that cannot, nor ever shall be rooted out utterly ": in certain circumstances it is lawful.[46]

I am selecting unfairly, for in each case Perkins qualifies heavily by insisting that riches are good *as they are used*, that men must desire them to glorify God, not for themselves. And he denounces engrossers, forestallers, usurers in the traditional manner. But I

suspect that many good bourgeois in the congregations of Perkins and his followers would follow the same principles of selection as I have done: the new concessions would be noted, the traditional qualifications would be forgotten, as with Calvin's shift of emphasis in dealing with usury. " The way of *Caine* is the high and broad way of the world."[47] " I doe nothing but that which everybody doth," cried Perkins's Worlding, explaining that it was competition, the blind forces of the market, not his greed, that drove up the price of corn.[48] And if " the obedience of the Gospel . . . makes every man in his trade, office, and calling whatsoever it be, to prosper,"[49] it was almost irresistible to argue backwards from prosperity to godliness. Perkins himself sold the pass. After stating that the master of a family may with a good conscience seek for that measure of wealth which is meet to maintain himself and his family in convenient food and raiment, he naturally asks how we are to judge what is sufficient. Not, he replies, by the affection of covetous men, but by " the common judgement and practise of the most godly, frugall, and wise men with whome we live."[50] That was to allow bourgeois society to set its own standards. " In the parish where I dwell, I am taken for an honest man," Perkins's own Worldling had boasted.[51]

The really poor, then, the expropriated vagabonds, are outcastes, outside the law and outside the church. Their only hope of salvation (and nothing else really matters) is to be set on work, so that by diligence in a calling they may once again be restored to a disciplined (let us hope) community, to a settled congregation and to the promises of salvation offered to believers through the church. In a real sense the way forward to a reintegration of English society lay through labour discipline and the development of production: the Spanish path of indiscriminate charity and contempt for labour was leading to stagnation. In the town of Mansoul, vagabonds acted as spies and agents for Diabolus.[52] Puritan social thought had an idealistic appeal as well as the sterner side I have emphasized in this article: many good men genuinely, and with reason, believed that it was merely demoralizing to give alms to idle beggars. " It is the good law of our Land, agreeable to the Law of God, that none should begge that are able to labour." This law was unfortunately not enforced: Perkins called upon all Christians, and especially Christian magistrates, to put it into effect.[53] It should not surprise us to learn that, when Charles I's personal government stirred up J.P.s to provide work for the poor, there was a more energetic response from the " Puritan " eastern counties than from the rest of the country, even though those counties were the most dissatisfied with the general tendency of the King's policy.[54]

Setting the poor on work promoted their spiritual welfare as well as adding to the national wealth. By the same token indiscriminate alms-giving was far from being a virtue, as papists taught and as

feudal society had believed: for Calvin and his followers it was positively harmful. It was a "good work" of the type which protestant theologians regarded as worthless. It was formal, automatic, thoughtless. The protestant ethic emphasized not the "work," the external action, but the intention behind it.[55] The Puritan was anxious that his charity should serve a good end: not only that he personally should get value for his money, but that God's purposes should be served. Since God preferred industry to idleness, giving alms to a strange beggar might well be a sin. Relief should be given only after proper investigation: and it should take the form of employment, not of alms, to all except the aged and impotent. Indiscriminate charity was mere self-indulgence.[56]

The problem of creating a new mental outlook was not solely or even primarily a matter of re-educating the paupers themselves. The whip and the branding-iron, and the pressure of starvation, would no doubt have done the job in time. Nor was there any insuperable difficulty in persuading the rich to close their purses, or at least to divert their charity into new directions. The real problem was set by those above the poverty line and below the status of large-scale employer of labour — the artisan and peasant majority of the population. Such men and women had behind them centuries of communual solidarity in the struggle against nature, centuries of teaching on the virtues of Christian charity. In the latter half of the 16th century there must have been few peasants who could be confident that eviction and vagrancy might not be their ultimate fate. It is therefore easy to understand that in many areas there was considerable sympathy for sturdy beggars, and that constables had difficulty in enforcing the poor law. Few villagers, few artisans near the poverty line, would lightly believe that original sin was the sole cause of vagabondage, that men took to the road for the fun of the thing, that all beggars should be punished, that property was more important than life.[57] The common people's hostility to the wholesome doctine of original sin is indeed one of the most regular complaints of Perkins and his Calvinist contemporaries in the ministry. A great deal of preaching was needed before truths so obvious to Puritan theologians would be accepted by the poorer members of their congregations.

So there was a double problem. First, to make parishes (and especially their richer members) aware of their responsibilities towards their own impotent poor. Secondly to make them (and especially their poorer members) discriminating in their charity. That was an additional reason for using the machinery of the parish for poor relief.[58] For only the church could undertake the enormous task of re-education that was involved. The parson, and only the parson, could exhort and instruct his parishioners in these matters; and the government could tell the parson what to say.

But although the church possessed an administrative machine

capable of pursuing this task with a single directed will, that will seemed to the Puritans to be weak. They would have preferred some form of presbyterian (or congregational) discipline. There you had a strong parochial discipline in whose supervision the minister (who might be old-fashioned, easy-going, lazy) was joined by lay elders, drawn from the employing class. A presbytery would really know who were the idle and who were the industrious in the parish: it would be anxious to encourage the latter and discourage the former; and it would have the powerful sanction of excommunication at its disposal. The presbyterian system, moreover, would have set parishes free from supervision by bishops, the nominated agents of the central government: yet it would have preserved, under new management, a national church, combining the advantages of local control by the rich with the possibility of national directives to impose the right standards on backward or recalcitrant regions. For a class that was confident of its ability to dominate any machinery elected from below, and so corresponding to the realities of power in the country, the introduction of a presbyterian system seemed to offer the possibility of a peaceful revolution.

I have no wish to exaggerate the importance of questions affecting the poor in the appeal of Puritan discipline for the bourgeoisie. Contemporaries can speak for themselves. Sir Francis Walsingham, a shrewd and not unsympathetic observer said of the Puritans:— " Because multitude of rogues and poverty was an eye-sore, and a dislike to every man; therefore they put into the people's head, that if discipline were planted, there should be no vagabonds nor beggars, a thing very plausible," though Walsingham himself did not believe it.[59] Lancelot Andrewes, no Puritan, noted in 1588 that the Calvinist refugee churches in London were able " to do so much good as not one of their poor is seen to ask in the streets," and regretted that " this city, the harbourer and maintainer of them, should not be able to do the same good."[60] Many years later, in 1645, Hugh Peters, brought back from New England by the outbreak of revolution, preached a sermon before Parliament and the Assembly of Divines. " I have lived in a countrey " he said, " where in seven years I never saw beggar, nor heard an oath, nor lookt upon a drunkard: why should there be beggars in your Israel where there is so much work to do? "[61] That message from the Puritan promised land at once drew on an idea that had been current for two generations and seemed to prove its truth from experience.

A presbyterian system was never established in England, for reasons that are social as well as religious. When power was ultimately seized by the House of Commons, it could only be preserved with the help of radical political groups drawn from artisans and small producers, who had no use for a presbyterian discipline. But by that time the critical period of expropriation, and the most urgent need for inculcating labour discipline, had passed. A century

of development of capitalism had done much to root out the old mentality, both in the poor and in the rich. In the subsequent history of poor relief other considerations come to the fore.

V

Since we have glanced forward to the civil war, however, one final point may be made arising from Perkins. His four unproductive classes were beggars, monks, idle rentiers and their dependant servants. This recalls irresistibly Baxter's analysis of the two sides in the civil war, concluding " Freeholders and Trades-men are the Strength of Religion and Civility in the Land: and Gentlemen and Beggers, and Servile Tenants, are the Strength of Iniquity."[62] Perkins, writing 40 years before the outbreak of civil war, in a society still dominated by the landed class, was cautious but nevertheless clear in his condemnation. "Such as live *in no calling*, but spend their time in eating, drinking, sleeping and sporting" are guilty of disobedience and rebellion against God. They will plead that they have livings of their own, and lands left them by their parents: but that is no defence.[63]

Disobedience and rebellion against God: they are strong words. A Puritan minister could hardly utter a more powerful condemnation. Perkins does not go on to say that idle rentiers, like beggars, were cut off from the church and so from the promises of God; though he does say that they serve neither church nor commonwealth.[64] But it may have occurred to some of his readers to reflect that the households of great landlords who had their own chaplains (whom they of course selected) and did not attend parochial worship, had in a sense separated themselves from the faithful. A Puritan petition of the fifteen-eighties asked that noblemen should be compelled to join with the nearest congregation, their houses " being commonly not convenient . . . to have such Officers as ought to be in everie Church, and the want of mynisters yet being so great." Peers should at least provide a sufficient living for their chaplains, and not take men from their congregations.[65] The judicious Hooker thought it would be " repugnant to the majesty and greatness of English nobility " to bring " equally high and low unto parish churches."[66] Fifty years later, in 1645, when the attempt was being made to establish a presbyterian discipline, the point raised difficulties, " the Lords pressing to have their chaplains and families exeemed, as before, from ecclesiastick jurisdiction."[67]

I do not wish to press this particular point too far, and there is no space to develop the general argument. I would however suggest that when we ask whether we should speak of " a Puritan revolution " or " a bourgeois revolution " in England we may be guilty of a false antithesis. For the fundamental concepts of Puritan thought

are bourgeois. Perkins is the key figure in the systematization of English Puritanism: and the tendency of his thought is towards the exclusion from full membership of the church, and so from active citizenship, of beggars and of rentiers and their hangers-on, who take no part in productive activity.[68] In the model Puritan society, New England, such exclusion would in fact have led to deprivation of political rights.[69] The logical consequences of this line of thought were never, so far as I am aware, fully drawn by Perkins or any of his followers: if they had been drawn verbally they could scarcely have been printed. But the mental attitude is unmistakable. It is shown, for instance, in the common depreciation of mere aristocracy of birth as contrasted with the aristocracy of the spirit. " No man," wrote Perkins (and he went out of his way to include princes specifically), " is to stand upon his gentilitie, or glorie in his parentage for nobilitie and great blood, but onely rejoyce in this, that he is drawne out of the kingdome of darkenesse."[70] Ungodly kings and property owners have " a civil right " by God's permission, and so are not to be deprived without good cause; " yet of themselves they are but usurpers."[71] Once these theses had become commonplaces, the good cause was found. The abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords in 1649, the confiscation of royalists' estates, would not have been possible without such intellectual preparation.

The full Calvinist discipline was never established in England. This was a natural consequence of the fact that the bourgeoisie ultimately came to terms with the rentier aristocracy, an illustration of Engels's pregnant dictum that " the bourgeoisie has not the stuff in it for ruling directly itself."[72] Faced with the alternative of sharing power with the social classes represented by the Levellers and the " bloody Anabaptists," or with the House of Lords and the bishops, those whom we call Presbyterians showed no hesitation. " The question is not, whether Bishops or no ? but whether Discipline or none ? " Baxter told the House of Commons in April 1660, in *A Sermon of Repentance*.[73] " If it then should have been said to us," the Rev. Henry Newcome reflected after the event, " well, you shall be eased of this power, and rid of the bloody Anabaptists, but you must have Bishops, and ceremonies again, we should have then said, with all our hearts."[74] Calvinism broke in pieces when the godly were faced with the choice between lower-class sectaries believing in universal grace and perfection in this life,[75] and a sceptical aristocracy whose authoritarianism was Hobbist rather than Calvinist. A generation elapsed before Locke shored up a system out of the fragments.

Calvinism disintegrated in the revolution it had done so much to make possible. Politically its achievements were wholly negative; but it moulded social thought in the Anglo-Saxon countries into patterns which still endure. " Moses my servant is dead " was the text which James Montagu, Master of Sidney Sussex, selected

for his funeral sermon on Perkins. He no doubt applied the succeeding verses in the same chapter of *Joshua*, wherein God assured his chosen people that they would prosper and have good success whithersoever they went (even " unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun ") provided only they were strong, and very courageous, and observed " to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded."[76]

NOTES

[1] The " rediscovery " of Perkins and his school has been the work especially of American historians. See Perry Miller, " The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, XXXII, esp. pp. 250-6, and the same author's *The New England Mind: the 17th century*, for Perkins's theology. For his social thought, see L. B. Wright, *Middle-class culture in Elizabethan England*, esp. pp. 170-86, which however deals with only one of Perkins's treatises; and M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, pp. 374-5, 411-12. There is a more comprehensive study of Perkins by Professor Wright in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 2. W. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, *passim*, has a good deal to say about Perkins's influence. There is a brief life in *D.N.B.*

[2] J. B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge*, II pp. 323, 339, 473-4. C. H. and T. Cooper, *Athenae Cantabrigienses*, pp. 335-6.

[3] Samuel Ward's " Historical Notes," in *Two Puritan Diaries*, ed. Knappen, p. 131.

[4] W. Perkins, *Works* (Cambridge 1609-13), III pp. 553-4.

[5] Fuller, *Abel Redevivus* (1651), p. 436; *The Holy State* (1648), p. 84.

[6] Ed. W. Haller and G. Davies, *The Leveller Tracts*, pp. 404, 362.

[7] *Memoir of Dr. Thomas Goodwin* by his son, in Goodwin's *Works* (1661-3), II p. lviii.

[8] Haller, *op. cit.*, chapters 2 and 3 *passim*.

[9] See for instance *Works*, I pp. 278-98, 328; III pp. 63-4*. (The pages in Vol. III are renumbered from p. 265. Quotations from the first 264 pages I have marked with an asterisk after the page number).

[10] E.g. I p. 563, II pp. 19-24, III pp. 270-3.

[11] I p. 438, II pp. 19-24, 44, 629. In his confident youth Perkins used to " pronounce the word Damne with such an emphasis as left a dolefull Echo in his auditours ears a good while after," but " in his older age " he " remitted much of his former rigidness " and preferred to preach God's mercy. The psychologist would no doubt be interested in the fact that Perkins died crying out " Mercy, Mercy," " which some standers by misinterpreted for despair." (Fuller, *The Holy State*, pp. 82-3).

[12] III pp. 493-500; cf. I pp. 537, 631; II pp. 290, 300; III pp. 583, 595.

[13] See Perry Miller, " The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, XXXII, esp. pp. 248-56. Contrast, however, Fuller, *The Holy State*, p. 82.

[14] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Pelican Edition), p. 152.

[15] *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, I p. 166.

[16] Strype, *Annals of the Reformation . . . during Queen Elizabeth's happy reign* (1824), IV, p. 405. A sojourn in a house of correction similarly led to weakness and loss of earning capacity, sometimes to death. (See *Warwickshire Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1637-1650*, ed. S. C. Ratcliff and H. C. Johnson, p. 13, 17, 29, 39, 53, etc.).

[17] Cf. S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War* (1901), I pp. 226-8; W. Haller, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-7.

[18] " Apology of the Church of England," in *Works* (Parker Soc.), III p. 87.

[19] Fuller, *The Holy State*, p. 285.

[20] Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, pp. 411-12. It is Perkins's importance as systematizer and popularizer that I wish emphasize. Similar views, though in a less sophisticated form, had been held by Edward VI. (Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, 1825, IV p. 85).

[21] *Capital*, Vol. I, ed. Dona Torr, p. 761.

[22] *Works*, I p. 755.

[23] *The Holy State*, p. 144.

[24] Compare the views of the Head of the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board, Mr. (later Sir James) Davy, as expressed to Beatrice Webb in December 1905. He wished " to stem the tide of philanthropic impulse that was sweeping away the old embankment of deterrent tests to the receipt of relief." (Beatrice Webb, *Our Partnership*, p. 322. See *ibid.* chapter 7 *passim*, and Margaret Cole, *Beatrice Webb*, chapters 9 and 10, for the discussions around the Poor Law in 1905-9. They were haunted by the ghost of Perkins).

[25] I pp. 755-6.

[26] III pp. 512-13.

[27] I p. 752.

[28] I p. 764. Perkins himself had been addicted to astrology and magic in his unregenerate youth (III p. 653).

[29] I p. 752.

[30] III p. 191*.

[31] III pp. 506, 607-9, 615.

[32] II pp. 9, 438. Crimes springing from poverty, Perkins thinks, should be less severely dealt with.

[33] III p. 191*. The promise is that made in *Matthew* 6.33.

[34] I p. 755. Cf. III p. 92*; also *Genesis* 4.12.

[35] III p. 539. Perkins uses the Geneva Bible. The text of the A.V. is slightly different.

[36] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Beveridge (1949), II pp. 288-9.

[37] I p. 298.

[38] I p. 295. The metaphors are illuminating: they help to define the class of person Perkins was addressing. Cf. I p. 778.

[39] For a very clear exposition, see *The Second Book of Discipline* of the Scottish Kirk (1578), chapter I.

[40] There is no room to prove this point by examples. I believe it is fairly generally accepted nowadays. But it follows from the Calvinist definition of the elect. They are the serious, educated minority, those who have sufficient leisure and learning to exercise themselves about whether they are saved or not. See Perkins *Works* I pp. 438, 636-42; II pp. 19-24, 44, 629. Cf. also Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts*, p. 64.

[41] I p. 769.

[42] II p. 150.

[43] III pp. 163-4*.

[44] III p. 177*.

[45] III p. 217*.

[46] II p. 116, I p. 63.

[47] III p. 549.

[48] III pp. 466, 471.

[49] II p. 290. Weber and his disciples have been accused of " grave anachronism " (e.g. by Laski, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, p. 34), since they generalized about Calvinism on the basis of late seventeenth-century examples of the permeation of the mediaeval doctrine of the calling by a capitalist spirit. They could however have found evidence of the process already at work in Perkins.

[50] I p. 769. *Frugality* was defined by Perkins's disciple William Ames as "a vertue whereby we order our matters, with profit and benefit." (*The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (1642), p. 378.

[51] III p. 465.

[52] Bunyan, *The Holy War*, in *Works* (ed. Offor), III p. 348.

[53] II pp. 144-5; cf. III pp. 91-2*, 539.

[54] E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief* (1900) pp. 239-41, 258-66, 294.

[55] Cf. III p. 304. Cf. also Stockwood, in *A Sermon preached at Paules Crosse* in 1578: "Almes . . . doth not consiste in the greatnesse of that which is bestowed, but in the minde and disposition of the giver . . All the large givings of the Papists, of whiche at this daye many make so greate bragges, bycause they be not done in a reverent regarde of the commaundement of the Lorde, in Love, and of an inwarde being touched with the calamities of the needie, but for to be well reported of before men whilest they are alive, and to be praied for after they are dead . . . are indeede no almes, but Pharisaicall trumpets." (pp. 106-8).

[56] These points were made as early as 1552, in *A Treatise how by the Worde of God, Christian mens Almose ought to be distributed*, presented by Bucer to Edward VI. Contrast the older view, expressed two years earlier by Robert Crowley :—

> "Yet cesse not to gyve to all,
> wythoute anye regarde;
> Thoughe the beggers be wicked,
> thou shalte have thy rewarde."
>
> (*Select Works*, 1872, p. 16).

[57] Cf. Edward Hext's letter to Burghley, September 1596 :— "Most commonly the most simple country man and woman" of Somerset refused to co-operate in convicting vagabonds, even when they had been robbed by them, since "they would not procure any man's death for all the goods in the world." (Strype, *op. cit.*, IV. p. 406).

[58] Additional, that is, to the general reason that relief of the poor was thought of as a religious duty to which ministers should *exhort* their flock. Only gradually in the 16th and early 17th centuries did the power of the state step in behind the ecclesiastical machinery as poor relief was transformed from a voluntary offering to a tax; and churchwardens and overseers of the poor were subordinated to J.P.s.

[59] Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, III p. 535. See also *The Second Book of Discipline*, chapter 13, on the economic advantages of discipline.

[60] Spittle sermon, quoted in J. O. W. Haweis, *Sketches of the Reformation*, p. 282. Cf. *Cartwrightiana* (ed. A. Peel and L. H. Carlson), pp. 243-6.

[61] *Gods Doings, and Mans Duty*, pp. 44-5.

[62] *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 1696, I p. 89. We may perhaps compare Jeremy Taylor's account of the royalist Sir George Dalston of Cumberland, whose alms-giving was so munificent that on one occasion in the civil war "the beggars made themselves guard" to rescue him from the parliamentarian enemy. (*Works*, 1831, IV p. 220).

[63] *Works*, III pp. 63-4.

[64] I p. 756.

[65] Ed. A. Peel, *The Seconde Parte of a Register* (1915), I pp. 168-9.

[66] *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Everyman edition), II p. 475. Hooker's cosmic philosophizing around this simple point makes agreeable reading. Laud disapproved only when families *below the rank of peer* made themselves "strangers to the Mother-church." (*History of the Troubles and Tryal*, pp. 544, 560-1).

[67] Baillie, *Letters and Journals* (1775), II p. 149.

[68] We may perhaps compare Saint-Simon's grouping together, as "les industriels," of the productive classes, bourgeoisie, peasants and workers. (*Oeuvres Choisies*, 1859, III p. 67).

[69] Beggars of course had no vote in Perkins's England. Davy told the Poor Law Commissioners that he thought they should be disfranchised. He said nothing about disfranchising rentiers. (M. Cole, *Beatrice Webb*, p. 97).

[70] III p. 293. Cf. I p. 119, and Haller, *op. cit.*, passim, esp. pp. 86, 168-9, 178-9.

[71] III p. 191*. The inclusion of kings here is oblique and cautious, but unmistakable to the careful reader of the whole passage.

[72] K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (ed. Dona Torr), pp. 205-6.

[73] P. 43.

[74] Ed. T. Heywood, *The Diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome* (Chetham Soc.), p. xxix. The same point is elaborated in Newcome's *Autobiography* (ed. R. Parkinson, Chetham Soc.), I pp. 118-9.

[75] The Quakers were only giving a new theoretical twist to the old belief which Perkins attributed to " the multitude of our people," that they could be saved " by their good serving of God, and their just and honest dealing among men." (III p. 595; cf. also the references given in note 10 above).

[76] Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, p. 438. The text is from *Joshua* I.2. Montagu, head of a Puritan college, was also a member of a great Puritan family which had patronized Perkins (see p. 32 above). His nephew commanded the army of the Eastern Association in the civil war.

Communication

A note on the arrest of pre-Capitalism in Italy

IN THE ABLE AND ORIGINAL PAPER WHICH HE CONTRIBUTED TO THE first number of *Past and Present* Dr. Rodney Hilton introduced the important problem of the arrest of the developed pre-capitalism of late medieval Italy and Flanders: . . ' one could almost say that here were societies trembling on the brink of the capitalist mode of production. Yet modern capitalism derived its initial impetus from the English textile industry and does not descend directly from the principal medieval centres.'

But does Dr. Hilton pose the problem entirely satisfactorily when he focuses attention away from Italy after the great financial and industrial crises of the fourteenth century? Making all allowance for the very considerable diversion of capital and energy into agriculture during the fifteenth century, Italian industrial activity was also most impressive during this period and through much of the sixteenth century. " With the end of the fourteenth century the secular trend turns again and opens a new upward trend which continues to the end of the fifteenth century. The production of this period gives the impression of a general tendency to grow . . ."[1] No single manufacture was now so central as that of woollens to the economy of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, though both Florence and Venice were producing woollens on a large scale in the sixteenth century. In Venice shipbuilding, glass-making and printing became major industries; there was intensive mining activity, particularly in the papal states, and a flourishing silk manufacture in Florence, Lucca, Milan and Genoa.

What we know of the Genoese silk industry during the second half of the fifteenth and well into the sixteenth century certainly leaves the impression of a society again " trembling on the brink of the capitalist mode of production." Supplies of raw material were ensured by large, carefully organized annual shipments from Sicily.[2] There was a formidable concentration of capital in the hands of members of the *Arte della Seta.* Concentration of labour was achieved by organizing the end-process of manufacture, dyeing, in workshops and by constant vigilance on the part of the government against attempts by the workers to carry their skill and materials outside the area of gild restriction, abroad or into the Ligurian hinterland. Finally the sharp divisions between manufacturers

and artisans provided an obvious anticipation of modern class antagonisms.[3]

The implication would seem to be that the long-term effects of the fourteenth century crisis upon Italian industry were not so catastrophic as is sometimes supposed; that an impressive recovery took place principally during the second half of the fifteenth century; and therefore that the problem of the arrest of the first movement towards capitalism in Europe might be advanced in time, the data of Italian history during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries furnishing clues towards its solution.

One obviously important factor, for instance, was the movement of precious metals. Synthesising several specialist studies, Professor Braudel has shown how Italy suffered an impoverishment of precious metals between c. 1470, when importations of African gold were dwindling, and c. 1540, when the effects of Spanish American bullion began to be felt.[4] The shortage of capital thus produced was aggravated by numerous local factors. Genoese businessmen, for example, were particularly affected by the loss of commercial colonies to the advancing Turk in the second half of the fifteenth century, which led to a diminution of fortunes founded on oriental trade and thereby to a shortage in the capital resources of industry; and by the inhibiting consequences of chronic political instability — which persisted until 1528 — on domestic capital investment. Later, when the flood of American silver entered Europe bringing inflation in its train the salaries of Italian artisans rose far more rapidly than those of their French, Dutch and English counterparts, a development which put Italian manufacturers at a decisive disadvantage in face of their foreign rivals.[5]

That the ravages of inflation in Italy were second in severity only to those in Spain was partly the result of the close political links forged between the two countries in the course of the sixteenth century. Dr. Hilton is especially acute on the capacity for resistance, occasionally even for expansion, of the late medieval political structure. As regards the stultification of Italian pre-capitalism the Spanish connection was a powerful factor in changing the character of economic enterprise. In other circumstances a considerable part of the resources and organizing ability which the Genoese in particular devoted to battening on the Spanish monarchy as financiers and condottieri must have gone into the development of domestic industrial production. But in fact Genoese industry dwindled throughout the sixteenth century, the tendency towards the capitalist mode of production being abandoned in favour of quicker profits and more spectacular social and political opportunities. Had the Italian state developed during the later middle ages at the national rather than the regional level the intrusion of France and Spain might have been prevented; and pre-capitalism organized on a national basis must have contained greater powers of endurance and

development. But domination by large foreign states, tremendously powerful even when traditional in their social and political structure, necessarily transformed Italians from economic innovators into parastites.

Social as well as political arrangements obstructed the development of fully fledged capitalism in late medieval and early modern Italy. The feudal aristocracy for example, displayed astonishing reserves of energy, resolution and adaptability, which enabled them to retain a very great deal of power in changed historical circumstances. Alfred von Martin writes: " The country nobility, in so far as it is not destroyed by ' chivalrous feuds and extravagances, settles in the town ' and takes up commercial activities. It thus wins for itself wealth, and upon that basis a new political power; in the process it becomes bourgeois in its nature, attitude and modes of thought, so that the bourgeois is no longer determined by his ancestry."[6] But this judgment infers too much from the Florentine experience — what of Naples, Piedmont, Liguria? — and exaggerates the degree to which feudal and aristocratic elements were swallowed up by the aggrandizement of the urban bourgeoisie. From approximately the middle fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century the latter tendency was reversed. Professor Braudel speaks of " urban political crises " which characterize the period 1450-1600, connecting these with a " failure of the bourgeoisie " and a " seignorial reaction," all these movements being especially evident in Italy.[7]

In Genoa, to resume a concrete and relevant example, the *nobili vecchi*, overthrown as a governing class in 1339, made a decisive come-back with Andrea Doria's coup d'état of 1528. The tenacity and adaptability of the medieval Ligurian aristocracy continued to characterize the multifarious activities of a family like the Grimaldi in the sixteenth century.[8] Certainly economic and political developments worked to their advantage: in an inflationary period it was generally the landed classes who came off best; and the subordination of Italy to Spain provided opportunities for economic and financial parasitism which enabled them to consolidate their domestic political predominance. But granting this we must still allow for extraordinary qualities of initiative and of skill in the operations of international finance which had their respective origins in a traditional habit of organization and command and in long acquaintance with commercial and financial techniques. The last point is important: geographical and historical circumstances during the middle ages dictated a diversification of economic interests on the part of the Italian aristocracy which strengthened their capacity for resistance and complicated the terms on which class struggles were fought.

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NOTES

[1] C. M. Cipolla, The Trends in Italian Economic History in the Later Middle Ages, *Economic History Review*, N.S., Vol. II, no. 2, p. 182.

[2] Archivio di Stato, Genoa: Instructiones et relationes, 2707G, *Memoriale su questioni mercantili in Sicilia* (1502); *Lettere Consoli, Messina*, 10 June 1556, 5 June 1559 *et passim* to 1592.

[3] See H. Sieveking, Die Genueser Seidenindustrie im 15 und 16. Jahrhundert, *Jahrbuch fuer Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im deutschen Reiche*, 1897, pp. 101-33.

[4] F. Braudel, *La Méditerrannée et le monde méditerranéan à l'époque de Philippe II*, pp. 373-4.

[5] Braudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-8.

[6] *Sociology of Renaissance*, p. 8.

[7] Braudel, *op. cit.* pp. 285-8, 616-37.

[8] For sample information see G. Saige, *Documents historiques relatifs à la principauté de Monaco*, Tomes II and III; V. Vitale, article on *Grimaldi* in *Enciclopedia Italiana*; R. Ehrenberg, *Das Zeitalter der Fugger*, I, pp. 326-34; A. E. Sayous, *Le rôle des Génois lors des premiers mouvements réguliers d'affaires entre l'Espagne et le Nouveau Monde, Bolet. de la Socied. Geog. Nacional, Madrid*, Vol. LXII, pp. 579-98.

[Mr. Hilton comments: " An interesting reinforcement to the point made by Mr. Coles in his note will be found in " A Sociological Interpretation of the Early Renaissance in Florence," Hans Baron, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XXXVIII, no. 4 (Oct. 1939)."]

Reviews

J. L. Talmon: *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy.* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952. Pp. xii, 366. 27/6).

Mr. Talmon offers us a new variety of history: Liberal Empiricist. It will have some appeal, and is likely to have followers. It is developed in this volume with skill, insight and passionate conviction, yet it is not satisfying. Mr. Talmon observes, acutely, that "totalitarian democracy" (by which he means dictatorship based on the mass enthusiasm generated by a perfectionist ideology) is just as much a part of the western political tradition as is liberal democracy; it is not, therefore, to be exorcised merely by reaffirming the western tradition, or by rehearsing the superficial "democracy vs. dictatorship" theme. What is needed, he believes, is to show where and how the humanist, rationalist, individualist tradition got off the track of liberalism, so that we may repair and guard against similar errors now and in the future. The division of the tradition into the two streams — liberal and totalitarian — he finds to have taken place in 18th century France. He treats the problem almost entirely at the level of ideas and ideology. The substance of the book is thus a study of the development of the "inner logic" of one stream of 18th century French political ideas, from the Encyclopedists through Robespierre and Saint-Just to Babeuf.

Although he is concerned entirely with the totalitarian tradition, his treatment of it depends on his concept of liberalism and his consequent distinction between the two ideologies. The crucial distinction, he urges, is that between empiricism and belief in an absolute natural order of society. The liberal tradition makes politics a matter of trial and error; it sees political systems as pragmatic devices of human ingenuity and spontaneity; it recognizes a variety of levels of personal and collective endeavour, outside politics; and it sees the essence of freedom in spontaneity and absence of coercion. The totalitarian democrats, on the contrary, believe in a sole and exclusive truth in politics; postulate a pre-ordained harmonious scheme of things to which men are irresistably driven and at which they are bound to arrive; recognize no levels of existence apart from the political; and see freedom as something to be realized only in the pursuit and attainment of the collective purpose — a purpose not imposed on men but considered to be immanent in man's rational nature and to constitute the fullest satisfaction of his true interest.

This distinction Mr. Talmon believes to be as valid for 20th as for 18th century democratic movements, and he insists that in both centuries these qualities are the fundamental ones. Indeed, as he tells us, he found this distinction first in the 20th century. "With

the growth of the Welfare State aiming at social security," he writes, " the distinction between the absolutist and empirical attitude to politics has become more vital than the old division into capitalism and social-security-achieving socialism " (p. 254). Whatever we may think of this view, which does not go very deep, we may wonder whether it was advisable to read back this new distinction into the 18th century, but Mr. Talmon was impelled to do so in order to give weight to his warning against any deviation from strict liberal empiricism.

The author's first task is to show how the totalitarian and liberal ideologies could have flowed from the same assumptions. He argues that the bourgeois ideology shaped by such *philosophes* as Helvetius and Holbach, while basically individualist and rationalist, contained, in its assumption of a natural order which could and would be realized by enlightened (or perfected) man, the seeds of the subsequent totalitarian tendency. When this assumption became an article of popular faith, it was only a step to the assertion of a unanimous general will awaiting expression by an enlightened and virtuous vanguard. Once the vanguard had got into power, its attempt to realize the rational and just natural order led necessarily to the denial of the right of opposition, to the suppression of parties, and in the end a dictatorship based on a single party of the faithful, intent on imposing a reign of virtue and freedom on the whole people — the dictatorship of Robespierre, Saint-Just and the Committee of Public Safety.

Now it is one thing to show (as Mr. Talmon does convincingly) that the idea of a natural order can easily be taken to totalitarian conclusions, and quite another to show (as he would have us believe) that certain political movements were driven to totalitarian positions because they embraced the idea of a natural order. Why attribute it all to the idea of a natural order? Are not the exigencies of revolution (and foreign intervention) sufficient to account for the totalitarian nature of Jacobinism? Mr. Talmon says they are not, but his own view is somewhat unhistorical. For instance, he attributes the Jacobins' proscription of parties to their belief in " a sole exclusive truth " which " excludes the possibility of political parties representing honest differences of opinion," and he complains that " Saint-Just is quite unable to see in the parties an instrument for expressing and organizing the various trends in public opinion " (pp. 115-6). But this is just what parties cannot be during a revolution; the revolution itself, while it lasts, without any belief in a sole exclusive truth, is enough to make a peaceable multi-party system impossible.

Some importance, indeed, may be attached to the Jacobins' belief in an absolute exclusive truth in politics; at least it made the path to totalitarianism easier. However, if we are to look, with Mr. Talmon, to doctrine rather than events, there is another aspect of their doctrine that may well have been more important. Both Jacobins and Babouvists were, as the author himself shows, quite unhistorical in their notions of human nature and the natural order. They were surprised that truths so obvious as their principles had not been thought of before. They had no concept of historical class

conditioning of individual wills; they dealt in undifferentiated humanity. They insisted, also, that the general will could be expressed only by men as individuals, not by parties, groups or classes. We may ask whether it was not just this naive, unhistorical, and abstract quality of their concept that made inevitable the transformation of a democratic movement into a totalitarian dictatorship. Mr. Talmon argues that any popular movement driven by faith in a pre-ordained natural order must assume a unanimity of real wills; that, owing to the uniqueness of individuals, there never can be spontaneous unanimity; that therefore the leaders of the movement, once in power, cannot get free assent, and so are driven to dictatorship: " where full unanimity is postulated, there is no escape from the imposition of a single will " (p. 207).

The concept of unanimity is not as simple as Mr. Talmon's treatment requires us to assume. Not only a pre-ordained natural order of society but any democratic society requires unanimity on fundamentals, that is, on all matters which men think important enough to justify the exertion of power over others. If the area of unanimity that is demanded is, as with the Jacobins and Babouvists, much greater than could in the circumstances emerge spontaneously, democracy necessarily becomes totalitarian dictatorship. But the circumstances are crucial. Among them, the stage of development of classes is of first importance in determining the area of unanimity that is practicable. It also has a lot to do with the kind of unanimity that is postulated as possible. A *petit-bourgeois* movement like Jacobinism, or a proletarian movement still based on the same individualist assumptions (like Babouvism) is peculiarly liable to demand a completely general unanimity at a time when it is least possible. It might be argued that it was the *petit-bourgeois* character of these ideologies, rather than the assumption of a natural order, that led so readily to totalitarian dictatorship.

If this is so, Mr. Talmon's assertion of the fundamental similarity of the 18th and 20th century developments will need reconsideration. Insofar as the " people's democracies " of our day have emerged in preponderantly peasant societies there may indeed be new elements of similarity to the 18th century to be found. But they will not be found by searching for one common factor in the realm of ideas; nor, if found, can they be expected to be the decisive elements in the formation of modern " totalitarian democracy." The weakness of liberal empiricist history is that it makes doctrine the devil, and so does not attend sufficiently to the social realities that give substance and direction to specific democratic movements. Neither understanding nor judgment can be adequate on these terms.

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W. C. Costin and J. Steven Watson (Editors): *The Law and Working of the Constitution: Documents* 1660-1914. Two volumes. Pp. XVIII + 465, XIX + 531. (London: A. and C. Black, 1952, 21/- and 25/-).

These two volumes of extracts from various types of source, with a minimum of editorial comment, are somewhat austere reading for the general public. Most of the detailed criticisms which one might make would only interest the limited class of persons who devise and operate the examination curricula of universities. Nevertheless the book has some general interest as an illustration of what two intelligent history dons believe to constitute the British Constitution, and how ideas on this subject are changing.

The chief innovation is indicated by the title: " The law *and working* of the Constitution." Section D and, to a less degree, Section B of each volume draw upon a new type of source—parliamentary debates, private correspondence of statesmen, evidence before select committees, and so forth. This kind of material illustrates a much wider range of subjects than the statutes and judicial decisions printed by previous editors. In particular, it illustrates the way in which political life was actually carried on — and what else is the British Constitution, in some of its departments, but ' the way in which political life is actually carried on.' ?

Yet this obvious improvement has its dangers. It gives an artificial prominence to the transitory and the contingent. Statutes are in force until repealed by other statutes; judicial decisions, for the most part, hold good until modified in a definable way by other judicial decisions. But the way of doing business, the conventions between kings and politicians vary from decade to decade, and not always in the same direction — they come and go and come again according to circumstances. A few samples, however well chosen, may give a false impression of continuity and purpose.

To give instances out of this book: any reader of Vol. I, Section D, No. XXXVII might think he was witnessing, in 1754, the establishment of a new convention, or the exemplification of an old one, to the effect that the king should allow the Cabinet to suggest a replacement for a deceased prime minister. But there was no such convention, then or later. It might sometimes be done in this way, but, in 1782, when Charles Fox claimed for the Cabinet the *right* to do it, George III successfully (and, I think, constitutionally) repelled the claim. Again, the editors print (in Vol. II, Section D, No. XVII) a letter of Canning on the expediency of allowing a free vote on Catholic Emancipation in 1827, which can have very little value as an expression of constitutional practice, since Canning thought only of clearing out of the way, before the impending ministerial crisis began, any difficulty which might prevent him from becoming Prime Minister.

These things could easily have been explained; but the editors' almost excessive self-effacement precludes explanation.

In nearly a thousand pages they had room to illustrate every important side of constitutional development. I cannot quite say that they have done so. They have been the first compilers to do justice to the rôle of the Cabinet, the political party, and the civil service. These are great merits. But they seem to me to have spent more time than they need on the pursuit of some old-fashioned will-of-the-wisps — for example, the definition of parliamentary privilege and of the right (and duty) to suppress riots. More serious still, they have a blind spot. They say little about corporations or other bodies exercising delegated legislation. This is one of the most important subjects in modern life. Most of the agencies of the 'welfare state' use such powers upon the private citizen every day, and he cannot be indifferent to their *modus operandi* or their relation to the central government which gives them the powers. Messrs. Costin and Watson's relative indifference to these questions may be accounted for in part by their terminal date: in this respect, modern history was only just beginning in 1914, and a book of documents which contents itself with a Pisgah-sight of this history from the commanding height of *Local Government Board versus Arlidge* must necessarily have an antediluvian air. But, in fact, another book of documents — that of Sir David Keir and Professor Lawson[1] — gives a better view of these questions even for the Victorian era, and I can only conclude that Messrs. Costin and Watson do not care so much as they ought about this side of our constitutional history.

Nevertheless, most Professors of History and members of Faculty Boards — as well as general readers, if this kind of book has any general readers — will probably prefer, and will be right to prefer, this collection of documents to any other.

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[1] Cases in Constitutional Law, OUP, 1933.

R. BAINTON: *Here I Stand.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951. 20/-).

Biography is a most important part of historiography. Through it we can observe not only the effective actions of a personality, but, also his personal motives, his peculiar aims and purposes; we can see what are the subjective reasons for his actions. But while the biographer has to uncover the reality of the beliefs and values of a historical personality, he has to avoid sharing in his illusions. A historical personality is such not because of his intentions, but because of his achievement; what is important is not the idea that moved him, but the objective outcome. Our earliest historical philosophers, Adam Smith, Turgot, Herder, were struck above all by the contradiction between human intention and result, and one might say that this observation is at the very base of historical thought altogether, since it distinguishes social change, the main object of historical study, from the illusions that have accompanied it. These " illusions " are not meaningless, for they provide, in the mind of the individual, his driving force. But they too have to be seen as socially produced, as the product of a particular objective situation; and if an outcome seems to contradict an intention, we cannot consider this to be an accident or misfortune, but, by analysing the origin of the intention and its relations with the objective world, we can go further to understand the deeper unity between the intention and the outcome, their deeper mutual dependence. The personal focus of the biography often fails to examine these relationships, and, making the personality into its hero (or villain), shares with him his disappointment that things do not fall out as he would have them; and, finding that he has to accommodate himself unwillingly to unpleasant facts, separates out what is considered to be his " true " character from the alien reality which " distorted " it.

Professor R. Bainton's biography of Martin Luther, *Here I Stand*, has many merits, but it suffers from these weaknesses. He has used with intelligence and discrimination the great mass of original documents and secondary sources, and has put together, in a very readable manner, all the important facts of Luther's personal life and thought. He delineates his early education, his religious convictions and doubts, outlines the scope of his life before the great challenge was issued, and skilfully analyses the controversies through which he clarified his doctrine. We see, in and following his encounters with Papacy and Empire, princes and towns, Zwinglians and Anabaptists, communistic sectaries and peasants, the formation of his political doctrine and of the Lutheran church with its structure, catechism and liturgy. Quite rightly Professor Bainton stresses the reluctance with which Luther recommended actions and shaped institutions which he felt, more or less clearly, contradicted his earlier beliefs; a large number of well-chosen and interesting illustrations help to make clear the attitude of his times, and thus to bring home the outward pressures brought to bear on Luther.

The book is really helpful as a description of Luther's work and character. One cannot disagree with the author's main contention, that Luther was " above all else a man of religion "; that " the great outward crises of his life were trivial to Luther himself in comparison with the inner upheavals of his questing after God." Yet this is not the main question. The significance of Luther lies pre-eminently in the solution that these outward crises found, to a large extent as a result of his work. It was this solution that moulded the lives and ideas of succeeding generations, that decisively influenced subsequent history. " Luther " stands for two opposed principles: he means " Lutheranism," the principle of an authoritarian state-church with a rigid dogma; he means " Protestantism," the principle of the revolt of the individual conscience against ecclesiastical and political authority, which has inspired numerous sects and was not without reason considered by nineteenth-century counter-revolutionaries as the father of the political revolution. The central concern of the historian must be the relationship between these two " Luthers," i.e. the dialectical unity of Luther and his times. By this standard Professor Bainton's book is seriously wanting.

We notice, for instance, that there is no mention of Germans whose views anticipate Luther's — Wessel who died in prison, or Murner, who linked up criticism of church-practices with the Pauline doctrine of grace, and who yet opposed Luther. Why did they fail, while Luther succeeded? The question puts into the limelight the form of Luther's protest, his distinctive appeal to the secular powers to set the Church to rights. From early on Luther's success was associated with his trust in the secular arm; and it is therefore unsatisfactory to look on the political implications of his work as accidental or indifferent, however much he may have been unwilling to think them out. Even less satisfactory is it to justify his trust in princes on the naive grounds that " Christian princes of his day were ready to stake everything upon their conviction." We are not told anything about the constitution of the Empire, the separate states, or the free cities, nor of the disruptive tendencies in the empire. We are led to think of Luther's protest as a more or less isolated action, instead of as one of numerous movements, political and social as well as religious, which make up the process of decay of the medieval empire. Nor is there any description of economic forms. It is right to stress Luther's opposition to merchant-capitalism and usury, but wrong to describe his economics as " agrarian," for he spoke in the interests of the conservative burgher and artisan even more than for the peasant. Equally, the description of the Lutheran church as established, and of the new constitution of states and empire after 1555, is far too summary. If these " environmental " factors are fully appreciated, we pass beyond the logic or illogic of a personality to the logic of a situation and process; only so can the personality be truly evaluated as well as understood.

It is important to recognise that this wider, more dialectical method is necessary for true understanding of the personality, as well as for the evaluation of his work. The biographer may consider understanding to be reached if we appreciate the conflict within

Luther between intention and realisation, e.g. as far as the state-church or loyalty to the emperor were concerned. But within this wider framework we are led to inquire what were the conditions and implications of Luther's Paulinism, or his desire to be "above all else a man of religion." Whence come these concepts and urges? Nobody is born with convictions and ideas, but we all acquire from our experience a set of practices, values and problems, which we can mould within certain limits. Luther's Paulinism, his separation of the two worlds of the spirit and the flesh, the centre of his religious impulse, are expressions of a social situation and a social trend. As long as he remained within the sphere of his Order, he did not have to face up to the social implications of his beliefs; when he was forced to consider their impact on the secular, institutional world, he was often pained at the results, and yet he was only discovering their implications. He remained confused, even resentful, about the way in which the world interpreted his efforts; but it is the duty of the biographer to see more deeply. In this respect history is a practical science. It is easy enough to be sincere on the surface, that is, to act honestly according to one's beliefs; the question is, however, are the beliefs themselves "honest," that is, can they lead to a consonant outcome. Any contradiction between outcome and intention should lead us, not to throw the blame on outward reality, but to investigate the objective conditions and sources of the beliefs themselves, and to excise from them what is inherently deceitful or illusory.

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